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EXPOSITORY

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LECTURES

ON

PAUL'S EPISTLES

TO

THE CORINTHIANS.



BY

WILLIAM LOTHIAN,

MINISTER OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ST ANDREWS.

“Αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ, φησὶ, βαρεῖναι καὶ ισχυραί.”

2 Cor. x. 10.

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MDCCCXXVIII.

365,



TO

THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF

ST ANDREWS,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

IN TESTIMONY OF

THE RESPECT AND ESTEEM OF

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE following Lectures were originally delivered (though in a more simple form,) in the ordinary course of pastoral instruction; and they are now offered to the public, in the hope that they may be useful in promoting the interests of practical Christianity. It has been my aim to unfold the mind of the sacred writer, in an impartial manner, without allowing any particular system to bias my judgment. I have stated, without reserve, what I conceive to be implied in the text; and I am not conscious of having wrested, in any instance, the words of inspiration, to support a favourite theory.

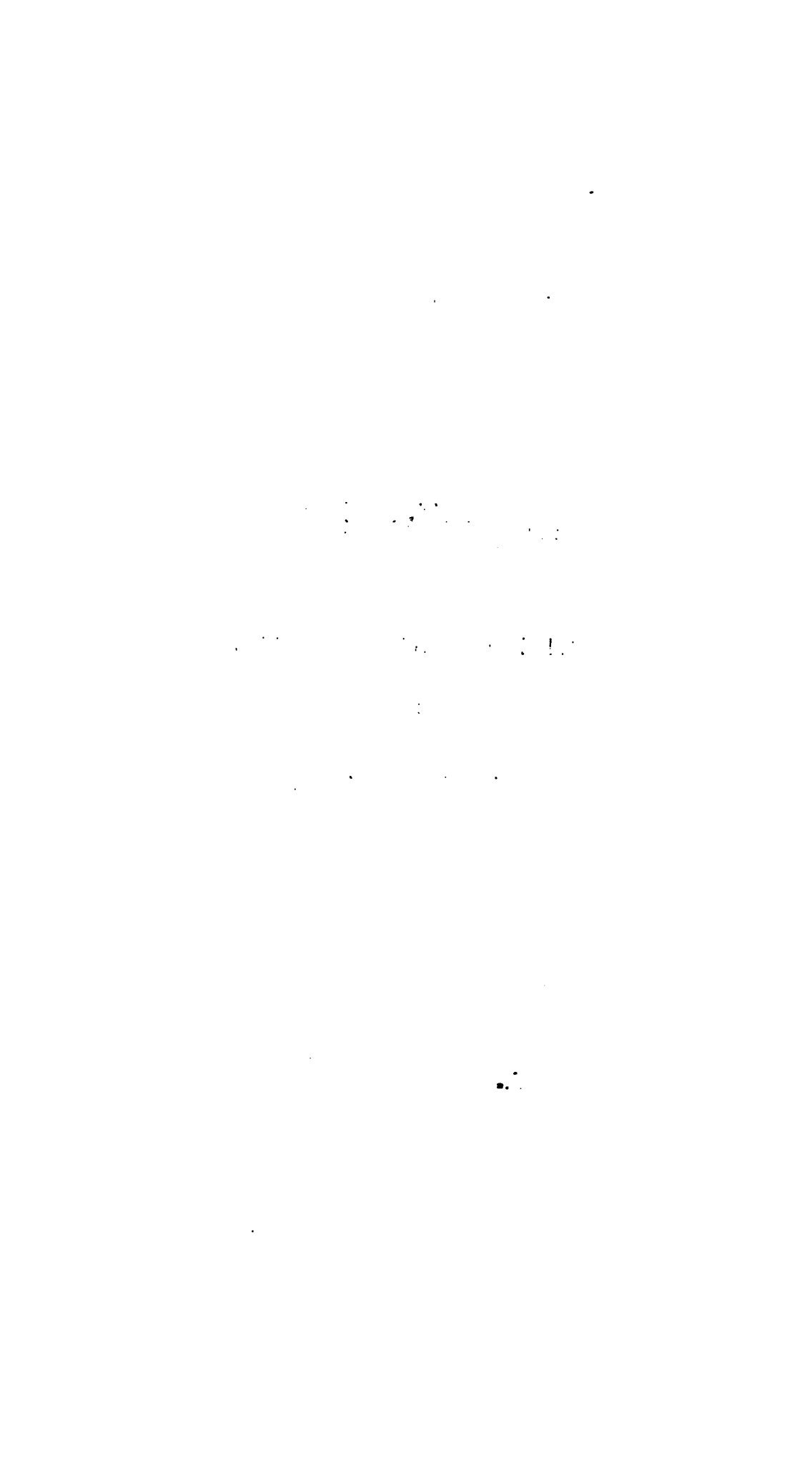
The Epistles to the Corinthians form an important part of the New Testament writings. Not only do they illustrate most of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, but they throw great light on the order and discipline of the primitive church. To those who profess to follow the apostolic model, in their mode of worship, it is hoped the remarks in this volume will supply some useful hints; but while *their* improvement is more especially kept in view, I have endeavoured to render the work acceptable to the christian

community in general. I have aimed at as much brevity as might be consistent with perspicuity ; otherwise, it would have been impossible to comprise the whole work within the limits of one volume. There is an unavoidable prolixity, and even awkwardness, in the paraphrastic mode of exposition, where the sacred writer is made to express, in his own person, the various senses which have been put on his words by commentators. Where mere *criticism* is the object of the writer, (as in some modern productions,) there is nothing to satisfy the pious reader, who aims at his own spiritual improvement; and, on the other hand, where only practical reflections are offered, there are still many difficulties left unsolved, which the critical student of the sacred text would wish to see removed. I have endeavoured to combine the advantages of these different methods—how far I have been successful, the public must determine. The principal authors to whom I have had recourse, are, M'Knight, Doddridge, Guise, and Scott. While I admire the critical acumen of the first of these respectable writers, I have often been obliged to express my dissent from his theological sentiments.

When I commenced the work, I was not aware that any separate publication on this part of Scripture was in existence. After it had gone to press, however, I was favoured, by my respected friend, the Rev. Adam Blair of Ferryport-on-Craig, with a sight of an old Commentary, in the Latin language, on the Epistles to the Corinthians, by

Dr George Weinrichius, Professor of Divinity in the University of Leipsic. It is printed in small quarto, in 1609 and 1610. The original Greek text, with a Latin translation of each chapter, is first transcribed at length; then the argument, or general summary, of the chapter is laid out; the division of subjects being marked according to the rules of the ancient logic. A short exposition of each part, thus arranged, is afterwards given, to which are added certain corollaries (*συμπεράσματα*) of doctrines deduced from the preceding text. In *these*, the practical observations are chiefly contained. So far as I have had an opportunity of examining this work, the Author's sentiments appear evangelical, and his illustrations are in general judicious. Mr Horne notices several detached treatises on parts of these Epistles, lately published in Germany, none of which I have seen, (*Introd.* vol. ii. p. 794.)

Instead of transcribing the whole passage expounded, at the head of each section, I have (to avoid repetition) simply introduced the verses as they occur in the course of illustration. But each verse is distinctly marked; and the whole contents of the two Epistles are thus, with very little variation, engrossed. In quoting the Apostle's words, I have, in general, retained the received translation. Sometimes, however, I have ventured to vary the expression, when the sense appeared ambiguous or obscure. In these cases, I have inserted the original word or phrase. Indeed, I have often done this where no alteration is made, to put the learned reader in possession of the principal words in



INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

CORINTH was an ancient and celebrated city of Greece. It was built on the isthmus of the same name, between the Adriatic Gulph and the Egean Sea, and soon rose to eminence by its trade and commerce. It had great influence among the Grecian states, and is called by ancient writers, "the light and glory of Greece." It was destroyed by the victorious arms of the Romans under Mummius, about 146 years before Christ; on which occasion, vast quantities of the precious metals having been melted, and mixed together by the flames, are thought to have produced that valuable composition afterwards called *Corinthian brass*. It was again colonised by Julius Cæsar, who endeavoured to raise it from its ruins, and to restore it to its former magnificence. It now became the residence of the proconsul of Achaia, under the Roman government, and was soon adorned with temples, baths, theatres, and other public buildings. The inhabitants were celebrated for their skill in the elegant arts. Philosophy and rhetoric were their favourite studies; and public schools were opened for the instruction of youth in different branches of polite learning. Near this city, the Isthmian games were celebrated every five years with great solemnity. Vast numbers resorted to the spectacles; the candidates engaged in running, wrestling, and other manly exercises; and the victors were crowned with garlands of pine-leaves or of parsley. To these games, the Apostle alludes in his first Epistle, chap. ix. 24—27.

But in the midst of all this refinement, the greatest licentiousness of manners prevailed. A temple was erected to the honour of Venus, where women prostituted themselves for hire; indeed the word Κορινθιαῖσις (to Corinthianize) applied to a female, conveyed an imputation of incontinence. Amidst the most abject

idolatry and superstition, the powers of human reason were extolled, and a refined scepticism, or rather atheism, was the secret creed of the higher classes. At the same time, they strenuously supported the popular system of religion, as an useful instrument for swaying the passions of the multitude. Yet, even in this strong-hold of infidelity and vice, the Christian religion soon obtained a footing. The Gospel was first introduced into this city by the labours of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Of Paul's first visit to Corinth we have an account in the 18th chapter of the Acts. There, we are informed, that on leaving Athens he came to Corinth. Here he found a converted Jew named Aquila, who, with his wife Priscilla, had lately been obliged to leave the city of Rome on account of the rescript of Claudius the emperor, against the Jews. With his usual simplicity of manners, the Apostle took up his residence with these pious individuals, and assisted them in their occupation of tent making. According to his usual practice, he frequented the Jewish synagogue, and discoursed both with the resident Jews, and the native Greeks, on the truth of the Christian faith. On the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, the ardour of his zeal for the conversion of his own countrymen, was greatly increased; he "was pressed in spirit, and testified to them that Jesus was the Messiah." His success *at first* was by no means encouraging; instead of giving him a patient hearing, "they opposed themselves and blasphemed." According to the spirit of the precept of his Divine Master, (Matt. x. 14.) he shook his raiment, and addressed them in these solemn words, "Your blood be on your own heads, I am clear; from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles." His labours, however, were not altogether without effect. Besides Justus, a pious man who lived in the neighbourhood, in whose house the Apostle was entertained, Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; many of the Corinthians, at the same time, were baptized into the Christian faith. (ver. 8.)

Notwithstanding these encouraging appearances, the mind of the Apostle seems to have been filled with uneasiness; perhaps in anticipation of the opposition that would soon be excited against him. To calm his fears, the Lord Jesus was graciously pleased to appear to him by night in a vision, and to animate his mind by the hope of increasing usefulness. "Be not afraid," he

aid; "but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Thus strengthened from above, he continued in Corinth, "a year and six months, teaching the word of God." It was not to be expected, however, that his inveterate opponents, the *Jews*, would allow him to proceed without molestation. During the administration of Gallio, the brother of Seneca, who was then proconsul of Achaia, they made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him before the tribunal, accusing him of introducing innovations into the worship of God. This was a matter which the deputy, with great truth, conceived to be beyond his jurisdiction; and therefore, without giving Paul the trouble of making his defence, he told them he would be "no judge of such matters," and in a summary manner dismissed the complaint. (Acts xviii. 14, 15.) Indignant at being thus disappointed of their purpose, and unmindful of the decorum that ought to be observed in a court of law, the *Jews*, or unconverted *Greeks*, according to our copies, took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, (who is thought by some to be the same person with Crispus) and beat him before the judgment-seat. But on this occasion the apparent impartiality of the magistrate degenerated into culpable negligence. Instead of protecting the injured party, and resenting the indignity offered to his authority, he took no further notice of their proceedings,—"he cared for none of these things."

No further interruption being offered to the Apostle, he prolonged his stay for a considerable time, and then took leave of the brethren, and sailed from Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, for *Syria*, in company with Aquila and Priscilla. Having landed at Ephesus, they met with Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; he was a native of Alexandria, and had embraced the doctrine of John: being a zealous and able preacher according to the views he had, Aquila and Priscilla took him to their house, "and explained to him the way of God more perfectly." Being desirous of proceeding to Achaia, the brethren at Ephesus furnished him with introductory letters to the disciples in Corinth; his labours were attended with uncommon success; he greatly strengthened those who had believed through grace, and produced considerable impression on the

minds of the Jews, by proving from the Scriptures the Messiahship of Jesus. (ver. 28.)

By the labours of these excellent men, a numerous and flourishing church was thus collected in the city of Corinth. Inspired teachers were set over them, endowed with the gifts of tongues and of prophecy, chap. xiv. and the ordinances of Christ were regularly observed, chap. xi. 2. Besides Crispus already mentioned, other persons of influence were received into the church. Among *these*, honourable mention is made of Gaius, an opulent individual, distinguished by his liberality to the whole church, and Erastus the recorder or chamberlain of the city, (Rom. xvi. 23.) who appears occasionally to have assisted the Apostle in preaching the Gospel. Among the earliest converts, the family of Stephanas stands conspicuous; several of its members devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints in their native city. (chap. xvi. 15.)

This happy state of things was not of long continuance. During Paul's residence in Ephesus, it would appear, that certain individuals came on a visit to Corinth, who began to trouble the disciples; who these persons were, it is impossible, at this distance of time, to discover. Some have thought they were *Judaizing teachers*, who taught the obligation of the Mosaic ritual as a part of Christianity; but it would rather appear, they were native Greeks who wanted to ingraft on the doctrines of Christ, the refinements of *human philosophy*. This led them to exalt the powers of reason, and to aim at illustrating the Christian system, by the speculations of the schools. It is well known to what an extent this method prevailed, during the dark ages. Strange as it may seem to us, the doctrines of Christ, instead of being explained from the Scriptures, were defended and enforced by appeals to the authority of *Aristotle*; and the presidents of the ancient Alexandrian school aimed at identifying the Christian faith with the tenets of Plato.* It is not wonderful, that this leaven began to insinuate itself so early as in the age of the Apostles, and hence the exhortations of Paul to beware of being ensnared by philosophy and vain deceit. (Colos. ii. 8.) This method of philosophising was peculiarly suited to the taste of the *Greeks*; and perhaps there was no class of persons among whom it was more likely to succeed, than among the volatile inhabitants of Corinth. In order to secure its reception, the factious teachers pretended, that the

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, cent. 2. pt. 2. c. 1. § 4.

Apostle had given the Corinthians a very *partial view* of Christianity ; he had, in fact, treated them as children rather than men, and had fed them with milk, not with strong meat. They even insinuated that he had but a very imperfect acquaintance with the Gospel *himself*, and that his claim to the Apostolic office was by no means sufficiently established. This opinion they endeavoured to render more plausible, by underrating the talents of the Apostle as a *public speaker*. His appearance and manner, they pleaded, were far from being graceful. On the other hand, they cultivated all the graces of style, and all the arts of oratory.—By this means, the confidence of the late converts in the authority of their spiritual father was greatly shaken. They had been accustomed to a refined and artificial manner of address, and they began to despise the elocution of the Apostle, as rude and unpolished. The factious leaders farther insinuated, that the circumstance of his having *laboured with his own hands*, while preaching at Corinth, instead of receiving maintenance from the church, like other Christian teachers, implied a consciousness, on his part, that his claim to the Apostolic office was at least *doubtful*. Nor were these the only tenets held by them. They pleaded for a licentious manner of life, under pretence of Christian liberty, which was a doctrine peculiarly dangerous in so corrupt a city as Corinth ; they accordingly seem to have patronized the incestuous person mentioned in chap. v. Of a similar nature was their tenet respecting the lawfulness of attending the idolatrous feasts of the heathen deities.

In addition to these attempts of the philosophising teachers, there were other circumstances connected with the state of the Corinthian church, which called for redress. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was in a great measure perverted from its original purpose, by the disorderly manner in which it was celebrated. (chap. xi.) The inspired teachers sacrificed the instruction of the church, and the conversion of unbelievers, to make way for the indiscreet use of the gift of tongues. (chap. xiv.) The momentous doctrine of the resurrection was explained away, as if a moral reformation were all that was intended. (chap. xv.) Doubts began to be started respecting the lawfulness of Christians continuing to live in their former situations in life—particularly when they happened to be connected in marriage with unbelievers. (chap. vii.) The more wealthy members of the church,

instead of referring their civil disputes with their poorer brethren, to the judgment of one or two of their fellow christians, brought them before the courts of law, (chap. vi.) and in fine, the church was fast declining from its original faith, purity, and love.

Of these disorders the Apostle received information from some pious individuals of the household of *Chloe*, a member of the church. It would also appear that the Corinthians had addressed a letter to him, requesting advice as to some of the points of difference which existed among them; but it was far from giving a full detail of all the disorders that had arisen. The Apostle was greatly concerned at receiving this unwelcome intelligence; and without loss of time he wrote this Epistle, which is extremely valuable, both as illustrating many important points of christian doctrine, and as giving authentic information respecting the *order* and *discipline* of the primitive churches. He begins by expressing his favourable opinion of their religious character, notwithstanding their unhappy disputes—blames them for their undue preference for one teacher above another—shews them how little had been effected by the researches of philosophy, and explains his reasons for cultivating, in his preaching, great simplicity of style. He contrasts his own circumstances with those of the opulent leaders in the Corinthian church—directs them to excommunicate the incestuous person—blames them for going to law with their brethren, and warns them against the licentious principles of the factious teachers. He then proceeds to answer their enquiries respecting marriage—points out the impropriety of frequenting idolatrous festivals—assigns his reasons for not having made himself burdensome to them—reproves the female prophets for affecting the manner of the heathen priestesses, and directs them to the proper observance of the Lord's supper. He shews that the great end of spiritual gifts was to promote the edifying of the church in love, which leads him to discourse of the value and excellence of christian charity. After giving directions as to the exercise of their extraordinary gifts, he proves the certainty of a resurrection from the dead, and concludes with giving advice respecting their intended collection for the poor saints in Judea.

The inscription at the end of this Epistle bears that it was written while Paul was at Philippi; but from what he says, chap. xvi. 8. it would appear he was rather at Ephesus. This is con-

firmed by the circumstance of his sending the salutation of the churches of Asia ; of *these* the church of Ephesus was the most flourishing, but Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia. According to the inscription, Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Timothy, appear to have been the bearers of the Epistle ; but it would rather seem that Timothy had gone *before* the others. With regard to the date of this letter, it is fixed by some to the year 57, by others to the year 60. Absolute certainty is not attainable on a point of this nature, nor is it of great importance. The Apostle would have visited Corinth *in person*, but he was now detained in Ephesus, where his preaching was attended with great success. In the mean time, he sent his brother Titus to rectify the existing abuses ; and he hoped to spend the following winter in Corinth, previously to his departure for Jerusalem with the collections, (chap. xvi. 3.) This plan he was afterwards obliged to alter, as we shall have occasion to notice under the second Epistle.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSE 1—9.

INTRODUCTION.

PAUL begins his Epistle by asserting that he had been " called to be an Apostle, by the will of God." It had " pleased God, who had separated him to this office, from his mother's womb, and had called him by his grace, to reveal his Son to him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles." Gal. i. 15, 16. In the words of Ananias, " the God of his fathers had chosen him that he should know his *will*, and see that Just One, and should hear the words of his mouth." (Acts xxii. 14.) He had neither *assumed* this office on himself, nor had he been appointed to it by the authority of *man* ; and therefore, no one had a right to call his commission in question, nor could he be divested of it by any human power. Indeed, he could not ascribe his election to any other

source than to the sovereign grace of God. That grace had been "exceeding abundant" in selecting him to be an Apostle, "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him, the chief of sinners, Christ Jesus might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should afterwards believe on him to life everlasting," (1 Tim. i. 16.) To give his admonitions the greater weight with the *Jewish* brethren, he joins to his own name that of *Sosthenes a brother*. This appears to be the same person who had originally been a chief ruler in the Jewish synagogue: he had been converted to the Christian faith, and had devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and it is not improbable that he acted as Paul's amanuensis in writing this letter. As he was thus well known in Corinth, it was desirable that he should unite his testimony to that of the Apostle, in reproving the disorders that prevailed in the church; for they would not surely charge him with ignorance or prejudice.

2. He inscribes his Epistle "to the Church of God that is in Corinth, to the sanctified in, or by (*u*) Christ Jesus, called to be saints," (or rather *called saints* κλητοὶ ἁγίοις). Thus the Apostle recognizes them, notwithstanding their defects, to be genuine christians; they had been *separated* (ἡγιασμένοις) from the world that lieth in wickedness, by the belief of the truth as it is in *Jesus*; they had been ingrafted into him who is the true vine, and were purified by his grace and Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the word of truth; they had been *called*, according to the divine purpose, to be fellow-citizens with the *saints*, and of the household of God; and though but partially renewed, they had turned from dumb idols to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. Thus sanctified and united by the truth, they were constituted a church of God, a society of faithful persons statedly assembling for divine worship in obedience to his authority, and for the observance of christian ordinances. It is maintained by some, that such expressions as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," &c. refer merely to the outward privileges enjoyed by professing christians, as distinguished from their heathen countrymen, and that the primitive disciples are called saints as opposed to the unrighteous, or idolaters, (Mac-knight, Essay 4. 48, 53.) On this plan Mr Belsham has lately published a new translation and commentary on the Epistles of

Paul, wherein he attempts to explain away all such passages as seem to bear on the doctrine of *special grace*. But any person at all acquainted with the language of the New Testament, must be aware that the primitive christians are described as persons who had received the gospel, not in *word* only, but also in *power*, and in the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance; who had been *quickened* by the mighty power of God, and in whom he wrought both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Such interpretations deprive religion of its richest consolations, and are designed to render the profession of Christianity consistent with the love of the world; but they never can prove satisfactory to those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The Corinthians, like the Ephesians, had been called by him who had "chosen them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that they should be *holy* and without blame before him in love." (Eph. i. 4, 5.)

The Epistle is further inscribed "to all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every place, both their Lord and ours." This was the grand characteristic of the primitive christians; not only did they *bear* the name of Christ, but they *called* on his name, acknowledging his essential Deity, as one with the Father, imploring those blessings which, as Mediator, he is exalted to bestow, and celebrating the mystery of his love in dying for guilty men. Nor was this only an *occasional* act of worship, it was their daily practice, and that by which they were known even to their heathen neighbours; hence it is observed by Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, that they "came together on a certain day, to sing hymns to Christ as to God." Accordingly we find Ananias, at the time of Saul's conversion, objecting to his being sent to him, on the ground that he "had heard by many of this man, how he had received authority from the chief priests, to bind all that *call upon thy name*;" where it is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ is meant. Even in the most trying circumstances, and in the agonies of death, we find the first martyr invoking the name of the Saviour. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit." But why should this be doubted, when our Lord, even in the days of his humiliation received the adoration of his followers, and declared that it is the Father's will "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father?" Yes, "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on

earth, and every tongue shall confess him *Lord*." It has been maintained by some that the words (ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ) should be rendered, *who are called by the name of the Lord Jesus*; but it has been justly observed, that this is the phrase which is used by the LXX in translating the Hebrew words קרא בשם יהוה, where the verb *to call* is unquestionably in the active form. When the meaning is, "*who are called by my name*," the verb is in the passive voice κη, and the Greeek phrase is quite different, ἐφ' οὗς ἐπικεκληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ' αὐτοὺς Acts xv. 17. Thus in James ii. 7. "Do not they blaspheme the honourable name τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς which is called upon you," or "by which ye are called?" This interpretation is confirmed by comparing these passages with Rom. x. 13. where our Lord is evidently referred to, and where the verb ἐπικαλεῖσθαι has undeniably an active signification, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."*

Thus the directions in this Epistle, though occasioned by circumstances of a local nature, were designed to be of *universal* application; all the followers of Christ are interested in every thing that relates to the purity of the church and the honour of the gospel; he is their common Lord, to whom they owe unqualified obedience, and under whom they are all united as their glorious head: By reminding the Corinthians of the relation in which all believers stand to Christ, he obliquely reproves their factious spirit, as if they had not "*all one master even Christ*."

3. According to his usual practice, instead of the ordinary salutation of *health*, the Apostle wishes the saints in Corinth the enjoyment of *grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ*. Here is an express instance of the name of Christ being invoked. The Father is called the God of all grace, and the God of peace; but it is through the mediation of his dear Son that these blessings are communicated to men. Nay, our Lord himself has promised to make his grace sufficient for us. He it is who said, "Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you." And O how suited are these gifts to sinful and wretched men! Not only are we *saved* by grace, but we must apply for daily supplies of grace, to help us in the time of need; and only in the enjoyment of the Divine favour can we possess true and solid

* See Dr Wardlaw's Discourses on Soc. Cont. Ser. 4.

peace : but we may draw near to God with confidence through the blood of Christ, as our reconciled *Father*, abundant in mercy and truth.

4. The Apostle gave himself to prayer, as well as to the ministry of the word ; and in his addresses to the throne of grace, he bore in mind the peculiar circumstances of the various churches he had planted. Hence we find him frequently alluding to the daily supplications he offered up on their behalf ; nor was the case of the church at Corinth overlooked by him : " I thank my God," he says, " always concerning you ($\pi\rho\iota$), for the grace of God that was given ($\delta\omicron\delta\omicron\tau\epsilon\nu$) to you in, or by, Christ Jesus." They had been brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel ; it was their happy privilege to know the grace of God in truth ; to them it had been *given* to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus to receive the rich communications of divine grace and spiritual influence. This heavenly gift had been bestowed on them through Jesus Christ, in whom all spiritual blessings are treasured up on behalf of his people. Some argue that by the word grace ($\chi\rho\alpha\iota\varsigma$) the Apostle refers to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit ; but though these are no doubt included, we must not in this way restrict his meaning. Without divine *grace*, in the ordinary sense of the word, the highest gifts would be of comparatively little importance. The word ($\chi\rho\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$) in the 7th verse, seems rather to refer to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

5. By the grace of God, they were thus " enriched in *every* thing *by* him, (that is by Christ) with (ι) all utterance ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega$) and with all knowledge, ($\gamma\iota\omega\sigma\iota$);" they were abundantly supplied with every gift necessary for the edification of the church. Some were furnished with the word of *knowledge*, which enabled them to unfold the scheme of divine mercy, in all its simplicity and beauty ; others were qualified, by the gift of *tongues*, to propagate the truth among persons of different nations ; or the truths that were revealed to *one*, were clothed in suitable language by *another*, for their mutual instruction. It is not easy to ascertain the exact difference between ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\varsigma$) utterance, and ($\gamma\iota\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$) knowledge, but this seems to be the sense.

6. These gifts were conferred on them *when the testimony of Christ was confirmed among them* ; so the preposition $\kappa\alpha\theta\omega\varsigma$ frequently signifies. Not only was the Apostolic testimony concerning

Christ *established* by the miracles which the Apostle performed, but its truth was further confirmed (βεβαιωθη) by the spiritual gifts imparted to the disciples, by the laying on of the Apostle's hands. These were a standing evidence of the divine origin of Christianity, and proved that Paul had received his commission from Christ himself. The words seem also to intimate, that the miraculous gifts enjoyed by the inspired teachers in the Corinthian church, were of the same nature with those by which the Apostle's preaching had been confirmed.

7. Thus enriched, *they came behind* no church in *any gift*; they were not deficient (ὀπίσθεσθαι) in any qualification usually bestowed on christian societies, at that period. Of these gifts, he afterwards gives a more full account, chap. xii. 8—11. Of course, when the Apostle speaks of their being enriched with all knowledge, and falling short in no gift, he must be understood to refer to the excellence and variety of these endowments, rather than to the *degree* in which they were bestowed.—In the *extent* of their knowledge, there was certainly room for improvement; for as to some points, they were still *babes* in Christ. While the Corinthians were thus distinguished by the gifts of the Spirit, they were led to make a suitable improvement of their privileges: "they waited for the *revelation* (αποκαλυψιν) of our Lord Jesus Christ." So it is said of the Thessalonians, "they turned from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven," 1 Epistle, i. 10. This was the great object that was kept in view by the primitive saints; they are described as looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God; as "looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." In the prospect of this event they rejoiced, though for a season they were in heaviness, through manifold trials: They considered it as the day of their complete redemption; and it was their great desire to be found of him in peace, at his second coming. Indeed, so much were their thoughts occupied with this sublime subject, that they were sometimes in danger of forgetting present duty, and required to be reminded that *that* day would not come till after the great apostacy. (2 Thess. ii. 1—4.)

8. Their expectation rested on the faithfulness of God; and the Apostle assures them, that he would not disappoint their hope—"he shall confirm you until the end, unblameable (ανεγκλητους) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." At the present, indeed, there

were many things in their conduct meriting reproof ; but so far as regarded their acceptance with God, they were already completely justified ; and the Lord Jesus, to whom the relative (*αὐτῷ*) seems to refer, would preserve them faithful unto the end ; and would at last “ present them holy, and unblameable, and irreprovable in his sight,” (Col. i. 22.) as a part of that glorious church which shall ultimately be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but it is, of course, supposed that they would continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Their security rested on a sure basis. 9. For “ God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Through the abundant mercy of God, they were called to a *participation* (*κοινωνία*) of those blessed privileges bestowed on the faithful, through the obedience of Christ—they were joint heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance ; they were members of that holy *community*, of which he is the head, (1 John i. 3.) and all the divine perfections were engaged in their behalf, to complete their salvation,—his wisdom, his faithfulness, his love, and power. Having brought them so far, he would not suffer them to come short of eternal life—“ if when they were enemies, they were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, *being* reconciled, they would be saved by his life.” Nothing should separate them from his love ; no enemy should pluck them out of his hands. His engagements to the Saviour, as well as his promises to believers, ensure their complete deliverance. And thus, in writing to the Philippians, the Apostle expresses his confident hope, “ that he who had begun a good work in them, would perfect it till the day of Jesus Christ,” (chap. i. 6.) Such passages as these seem clearly to establish the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. It has been observed, that the name of the Lord Jesus is repeated no less than *ten times* in the course of as many verses—a degree of frequency which would hardly be agreeable to fastidious ears, but which shews the great love which the Apostle had for that venerable name : and it is still precious to them that believe ; they can say, in the language of the Poet,

“ Jesus ! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease ;
’Tis music in the sinner’s ears ;
’Tis life, and health, and peace !”

By this conciliatory introduction, the Apostle prepares the minds of the Corinthians for receiving, in good part, the reproofs which he was about to administer. It was also his wish to avoid every thing that might discourage them, or lead them to call in question the reality of their conversion. This is a proof of the tenderness of his spirit, and of his great knowledge of human nature.

REFLECTIONS.

1. From this passage, we learn the proper qualifications of church members—they must be persons who give evidence of having been sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints. Such was the character of the first christians, though undoubtedly there were some in the primitive churches who had only a form of godliness. Still, however, the majority could be addressed in the judgment of charity, as faithful brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.

2. Even in those who know the Lord, there is often much that calls for reproof; but in administering the necessary warnings we must avoid the indulgence of a contentious spirit, and commend them for those qualities which they possess *in accordance* with the nature of the Gospel.

3. Have we been sanctified by the truth as it is in Christ?—How happy our privilege, how secure our hope, how animating our expectations! God is faithful who hath called us, and to them that look for him, he will appear, the second time, without a sin-offering, to their salvation. But are we living according to the course of this world? how vain to name the name of Christ! Then to us his second appearing can be no object of hope, but the source of uneasiness and fear.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSE 10—16.

IMPORTANCE OF UNITY.

The Apostle had expressed his confidence in the religious character of the members of the Corinthian church. He now

proceeds to one principal design of his letter, to warn them against imbibing a contentious and party spirit. 10. "Now I exhort you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms (σχίσματα) among you, but that ye be perfectly united (καταρτισμένοι) in the same mind (νοῦ) and in the same judgment (γνώμη)." He beseeches them to preserve unity of sentiment, and affection in the church, by that endearing name, by which the whole redeemed family in heaven and earth is named; and which ought, of itself, to be a pledge of their mutual attachment, and the bond of peace. This was a point of the first importance, on the observance of which depended the credit of the Gospel, the stability and prosperity of the church, and the comfort of their own souls. Here it is not necessary to suppose that the Apostle means to require an absolute *sameness of opinion* among the followers of Christ; this is not to be expected in the present state of human nature, while the capacities, prejudices, education, habits, and tempers of men, are so various. These the Gospel sanctifies and improves, but does not *eradicate*. And it is evident, both from this Epistle, and from that to the Romans, (chap. xiv. 5.) that the primitive christians were not all of one mind, as to the obligation of certain observances. Thus, some who were weak, would only eat *herbs*; and one man esteemed one day above another, while others esteemed every day alike. Neither does the passage seem to require an exact uniformity in external forms and modes of worship. The fact is, this has often been the consequence of ignorance and indifference, and a mark of degeneracy and corruption. The church never enjoyed a greater semblance of uniformity, than just before the Reformation; yet it never was more corrupt. This enforcement of uniformity has often occasioned unhappy disputes, and unrighteous persecutions, which have led to the very evils here deprecated—divisions and separations. Those who insist on an exact uniformity, at the expence of the conscience of their brethren, are chargeable with the sin of schism, not the individuals who resist impositions of human authority.* Nor can the passage mean that it is the duty of Christians to sacrifice what they believe to be a part of the will of God, in order to maintain a specious appearance of unity in the church; for we are

* See Campbell's Prelim. Dissert. Dissert. 9. pt. 3.

forbid either to add to, or diminish from, the words of God ; and we must follow his will, without regard to the opinion of others. But what the Apostle seems to enjoin is, that those who are united in their views respecting the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and in the observance of the same ordinances, should live together in peace, and avoid all occasions of contention and strife. It is evident that the Corinthians had not split into distinct churches ; but they had formed different parties in the same church. Thus, while the *semblance* of union was retained, there was no real fellowship ; the *design* of their meeting together was forgotten. Their differences did not arise from entertaining conscientious scruples respecting some points of doubtful disputation ; then it would have been their duty to bear with each other ; but from indulgence of party feelings, utterly at variance with the due exercise of christian love. Now, *such* divisions ought to be immediately laid aside ; and called forth the just animadversion of the Apostle. They all professed to hold the same faith, and to be members of the same body ; and it was their duty to avoid every thing that would interrupt the free exercise of mutual sympathy and affection. The word, (καταρτίζω) signifies to compact together, as the stones in a building, or the members of one body. (See Parkhurst.) Thus there should be no disruption or dislocation of parts in the Christian church. See on 2 Cor. xiii. 11. ; also Phil. ii. 1, 2.

It is *desirable* that those who are united in church fellowship, should be of one mind and one judgment respecting the doctrines they hold, and the institutions they observe. Those, however, who have confidence in each other, as sincere disciples of Christ, though they may not see it their duty to remain in the same communion, ought to cherish a spirit of mutual esteem and goodwill ; and to make the great points on which they are *agreed*, the bond of their union. All evangelical christians, are nearly united respecting what should be considered as the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

11. The Apostle had reason to fear that the church at Corinth was very far from exhibiting this happy union of sentiment ; “ For it has been shewn (ιδηλαθη) to me my brethren, concerning you, (προς) by them of the family of Chloe, that there are contentions, or strifes, (εξιδεις) among you.” Some have conjectured that the persons here mentioned were Fortunatus and Achaicus,

referred to, chap. xvi. 17., and that these were sons of Chloe. This is uncertain; but the accounts which they brought were very painful to his mind. He does not conceal the *name* of the family, that the Corinthians might know his authority, and to shew that he was not displeased with the spirit and zeal of these individuals, who were actuated, not by an officious disposition, but by love to their brethren, and zeal for the glory of God. From *them* he had learned that the Corinthians had fallen from their first love, and that a spirit of contention and jealousy had arisen among them. 12. "Now this I say brethren, that each of you (*ἕκαστος*) saith, I indeed am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." It is not certainly known, whether the different parties actually assumed the names of the persons here specified, or whether the Apostle merely avails himself of these names, to avoid giving unnecessary offence by enumerating the *real leaders* of the faction at Corinth. This last supposition seems verified by what is said chap. iv. 6. "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes." Each party might have much to say, in defence of their favourite preacher, as they would certainly have for the respected names here specified. *Paul* had *planted* the church at Corinth—he was their spiritual father, and his preaching was remarkable for simplicity and purity; these, according to modern ideas, would seem best to entitle him to give *his name* to the church. *Apollos* was an eloquent speaker, and mighty in the scriptures, and had laboured among them with great success after Paul's departure; *Cephas* or *Peter* was distinguished among the twelve, and had first opened the door of faith to the Gentiles; he was also in an eminent degree the Apostle of the circumcision. Those who took the name of *Christ*, would seem to have the fairest pretensions; but they arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of Christians, and at the same time despised his apostles and ministers. Thus those excellent names were used as the mere watchword of a party, while their professed followers neither aimed at imitating their virtues, nor considered the entire unity of their interests and views.

The Apostle therefore proceeds, in a lively manner, to argue with them on the pernicious consequences of such conduct. 13. "Is *Christ* divided, was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized into the name of *Paul*?" Did they imagine there were as many

Saviours as there were parties---or that the salvation of Christ could be separated from the obedience that is due to his authority, and that of his servants? Did they owe their hope of acceptance with God to the Apostle's *sufferings*, or were they bound to yield the same reverence and obedience to *him*, which they owed to that Divine Redeemer into whose name they had been *baptized*? No doubt they would abhor the thought of placing a fellow creature on a level with the Almighty Saviour: why then should they set their names in opposition, as if they had contrary objects in view? For his own part, the Apostle was happy that he had avoided, as much as possible, giving any countenance to such divisions. Though he had laboured more abundantly than any of his brethren, and had been honoured to bring many of the Corinthians to the knowledge of the truth, Providence had so ordered it, that he had administered the initiatory rite of Christianity to very few of them. This indeed he had purposely avoided, lest any one should be led to the conclusion that he was making disciples to *himself*. 14, 15. "I thank my God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should say that I baptized into my own name." This ordinance, which has been the subject of so much disputation, and on which such undue stress has been laid by persons holding very different sentiments respecting its efficacy, the Apostle viewed merely as a symbolical rite, which might be performed by any inferior person; and he would not allow his attention to be diverted from the main object of his ministry, by any subordinate duty. 16. On further consideration, he recollected that he had *also baptized the family (οἶκος) of Stephanas*, "besides whom," he adds, "I do not know whether I baptized any other." The Apostle speaks from his own memory, and absolute certainty was not required in relating so trifling a circumstance. Some things seem to be mentioned by him, as a private individual; but even when he appears to distinguish what he said as a *man*, from what he uttered by *inspiration*, it is implied that when no such distinction is marked, he is to be viewed as speaking by the Spirit of God.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Divisions in the church hinder the spread of the Gospel, open the mouths of the enemies of Christ, inflame the passions

of those who are engaged, and distort the whole aspect of Christianity. Unity is the *strength* of the church. It is to be observed, however, that the Apostle speaks of *groundless separations*. To withdraw from unscriptural communions, where the laws of Christ are not observed, is not to be stigmatized with the name of *schism*, but is enjoined as a *duty* on the disciples of Christ, 2 Epistle vi. 17. 2 Thess. iii. 6.

2. It is to be regretted that so many party names prevail in the Christian world; may it not be said with greater reason *now*, "each of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos?" It is said of Luther, that he was much grieved that those who embraced his doctrine should call themselves by his name. This often occasions a blind deference for the authority of men.

3. The positive institutions of Christ should always be viewed as *subservient* to the great end of preaching the Gospel.

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 17—25.

THE RECEPTION GIVEN TO THE GOSPEL BY DIFFERENT CLASSES.

THE Apostle had stated his reason for having baptized so few of the Corinthian converts, namely, lest any should say he baptized in his own name. He now adds another reason. He had been commissioned by Christ to preach the glad tidings of salvation, which to him was an object of far greater interest, than the administration of any external ceremony. 17. "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." In executing this commission, he aimed at great simplicity of language, which some were ready to adduce as an argument against his apostolic authority. He had, however, a particular reason for *this* also, for he knew that the most simple and unadorned exhibition of the doctrines of the cross, would be the most successful. He preached, "not with the wisdom of speech, (*λογου*) lest the cross of Christ should be rendered vain;" (*κενωθη*, should be emptied or deprived of its effect.) Had the Apostle endeavoured to illustrate the mysteries of redemption, on the principles of natural *reason* or of human philosophy; or had he clothed his sentiments in the

studied language of the Grecian orators, the cross of Christ would have been deprived of its honour ; and the effect would have been ascribed to the art of the speaker, rather than the merit of his doctrine. By the *wisdom of man*, so often alluded to in this Epistle, we are to understand the various systems of heathen philosophy then in repute, which pretended to explain the origin of things, the character and government of God, or the nature and obligations of virtue ; consequently, the remarks of the inspired writer apply equally to all modern systems which affect to explain these subjects *independently of revelation* ; but we are not to suppose that he would reprobate the discoveries of *natural science*, which have thrown so much light on the works of God. And though he disclaimed the meretricious ornaments of heathen oratory, he was no enemy to true eloquence, as many passages in his own writings abundantly prove—if by eloquence be understood the use of a pure and persuasive style of language. It may be said of the preaching of the cross, what the poet says of natural beauty, “ It is, when unadorned, adorned the most.” Foreign ornaments, instead of improving it, only obscure its glory, and neutralise its power. This is beautifully expressed by Cowper, in these well-known lines :

“ Ah ! how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heav’n’s easy, artless, unencumber’d plan !
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clust’ring ornaments to clog the pile :
 From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
 It stands, like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity :
 Engraved above the portal from afar,
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-cheering words, Believe and Live !”

POEM ON TRUTH, v. 21.

The Apostle was quite aware that the subject of his preaching was a ground of offence to many ; but there was no other doctrine that would be owned of God : 18. “ For the preaching (*λογος* the word) of the cross is to them that perish foolishness (*μωρία*), but

to us who are saved it is the power of God." So when our Saviour taught the doctrine of salvation by his blood, the Jews exclaimed, "this is an hard saying, who can hear it?" And when Paul preached, to the polite Athenians, Jesus and the resurrection, they observed, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears." Even the noble Festus, forgetting the dignity of his office, interrupted the beautiful defence of the Apostle, and cried from the bench, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts xvii. 20. xxvi. 24.) At *this day*, the refined inhabitants of France designate those who preach the pure doctrine of the cross, by the name of *momiers* or fools. There are many circumstances which might occasion the Gospel, when first propagated, to be esteemed *foolishness*,—the obscurity of our Saviour's rank in life, contrasted with the divine honours paid to him by his followers—the meanness of the instruments employed to publish it to the world, Jewish fishermen, tax-gatherers, &c.—the mysterious nature of its doctrines, respecting the incarnation of Christ, the atonement, the necessity of divine influence, and the resurrection of the dead—its depreciating language as to the insufficiency of human reason to discover a way of salvation, and the inefficacy of human righteousness to procure acceptance with God—its doctrine of justification by faith—the self-denial and separation from the world which it enjoins on those who believe—and especially the unadorned language of the first preachers. It is evident that many are still offended at the preaching of the cross on these accounts. But mark the situation of such persons; however admired for their wisdom, their learning, their eloquence, or other accomplishments, they *perish*; for they reject the only remedy provided for the spiritual maladies of man. To those, on the other hand, who receive the testimony of God as true, it bears the evident marks of *divine power*. Thus the Apostle, in another place, observes, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," (Rom. i. 16.) Not only does the power of God appear in sustaining our Saviour under the load of his sufferings, and in raising him from the dead; but in turning men, by the word of the cross, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God—in subduing the pride and obduracy of their hearts—in mortifying their evil passions—in raising them to spiritual life—preserving them amidst the temptations

that are in the world, delivering them from the fear of death, and inspiring them with a hope full of immortality. They can set to their seal that God is true; they have the witness in *themselves* of the truth of Christianity, in the fact of their own conversion, and in the joy and peace communicated to their minds. Thus the influence of the truth is to *them* "an evident token of salvation, and that of God." In a word, the Gospel comes to them, not in word only, but in power; and the agency of the Holy Spirit secures for it a cordial reception on the part of those who are saved.

It was the design of Providence to shew the inefficacy of human reason to arrive at the knowledge of divine things, in order to prove the necessity of a divine revelation. 19. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will set aside (*ἀθετησάτω*) the understanding of the prudent (*σοφιστῶν*)." This appears to be a quotation from Isaiah xxix. 14. where, in reproving the Jewish nation for their hypocrisy in drawing near to God with their mouth, while their heart was far from him, the Lord threatens to visit them with a spirit of judicial blindness, "for the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." This was exemplified in the case of the Jewish scribes and rulers, when they were silenced and baffled by the illiterate fishermen of Galilee; and ever since that time the veil has been on their understanding, so that they cannot perceive the obvious reference of the Old Testament Scriptures to the person and work of the Lord Jesus. It is also illustrated by the superiority of the Gospel to all the boasted systems of philosophy. Christianity so far excels *these*, both with respect to the doctrines which it teaches and the precepts which it enjoins, that it appears as if the wisdom of the wise had been destroyed, and the understanding of the prudent set aside. *They* also stumble at the *simplicity* of the doctrines of Christ, which are thus "hid from the wise and prudent, and are revealed unto babes."

The Apostle now asks, in a triumphant manner, where were those venerated names that had attracted the admiration of mankind by their learning and talents? 20. "Where is the wise? (*σοφός*) where is the scribe? (*γραμματεὺς*) where is the disputer (*συζητητής*) of this world? Hath not God made foolish (*ἠμώσαν* infatuated) the wisdom of this world?" Some have thought he here alludes to Isaiah xxxiii. 18. where the prophet, describing the peaceful state of the church after the destruction of the Assyrian army,

represents the people as looking round in search of the objects of their former terror, and triumphantly asking "Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?" But the expressions are so different from those here employed, both in the Hebrew text and in the LXX. that the apparent similarity appears to be merely accidental. But the Apostle might well ask, "where is the wise?" For it is well known that the researches of the heathen philosophers after divine truth, threw very little light on the most important subjects. They could arrive at no certainty as to the most simple truths of religion; they were ignorant of the true relation in which we stand to God as fallen creatures; they could not shew in what way sin could be pardoned, in consistency with the moral perfections of God; they could not come to any certain conclusion as to the immortality of the soul, and a future state. Even the "divine Plato" represents his great master, Socrates, in his *Apology*, (sect. 32.) as still in doubt whether or not the soul would survive the body. "Death," says he, "is one of two things; either the dead return to nothing, and lose all sensation, or they are transported (as it is said) into some other place." (*δύοις γὰρ θάτερον ἐστὶ τὸ τελευτᾶν*, &c.) Cicero, the greatest of philosophers among the Romans, uses almost the same words when speaking of death: *post mortem, quidem, sensus aut optandus aut nullus est*. "After death there is either no sensation, or an agreeable one." (*De Senect.* § 20.) And Cæsar is represented by Sallust, as avowing a total disbelief of a future state; speaking of death, he says, *eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere; ultra neque curæ, neque gaudio locum esse*, "it puts an end to all the ills of mortals, neither beyond it is there room for grief or joy." (*Catal.* c. 51.)* Indeed, at the time when the Gospel was published, the learned men of antiquity seem generally to have sought refuge in an universal scepticism. And what had they done to enlighten or reform the world? They countenanced the reigning superstition as an useful engine of government, while they allowed the multitude to be enslaved by idolatry and vice. Nor were the Jewish scribes greatly superior, in some respects, to the heathen sages.

* Thus the sentiment was understood by Cato; referring to what Cæsar had said, he observes, *Falsa credo existumans quæ de inferis memorantur*, &c. "thinking, I suppose, those things are false which are related of the shades below."

They had, it is true, a more correct knowledge of God and of a future state ; but they obscured the majesty and simplicity of the law, by their foolish glosses and childish interpretations, and they made void its authority by their vain and unwarranted traditions. In fact, they were, as our Saviour observes, "blind leaders of the blind;" while in their own conduct they were only distinguished for their rapacity, their pride and voluptuousness. By the *disputers of this world*, the Apostle is thought to refer to the sceptics or Pyrrhonists, whose leading principle was to doubt of every thing, and who consequently made it their business to dispute on all subjects, and were in continual suspense of judgment. Instead of dispelling ignorance, such persons perplexed the plainest truths, and multiplied the doubts they pretended to remove. Such speculations might amuse an idle hour, and give exercise to the inventive powers; but how little calculated were they to lead to God, or to mend the heart! how poor a refuge in adversity, and how ill fitted to support the mind in death! What childish trifling do the speculations of the greatest men of antiquity sometimes exhibit! The same remark may be applied to the scholastic disputations of the *middle ages*. The powers of the understanding were wasted in angry and unprofitable controversies, while the cultivation of solid piety was neglected, and the truths of the Gospel were buried under a heap of rubbish.

In the infinite wisdom of God, it was so ordered, that after mankind had employed every means to find out the true knowledge of his character and government, they should, after all their researches, remain in a state of ignorance or doubt. 21. "For after (or when *πεινῶν*) in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Here the Apostle asserts that men never did, and never could, arrive at the knowledge of the true God, without a divine revelation. This conclusion is confirmed in the clearest manner by historical facts. Though God had originally revealed himself to man, and though his eternal power and Godhead were displayed by the things which he had created, yet, as the Apostle observes, Rom. i. 28. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge.—When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise,

(σοφοί, the very title they arrogated to themselves) they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things ;" and this corruption of religion was followed by universal degeneracy of manners. Whilst the common people in the heathen world, worshipped the host of heaven, or the spirits of departed heroes, or even rare, hurtful, or useful animals, it is equally true that their learned men, by their philosophical researches, here denominated *wisdom*, knew not God. This truth is triumphantly established by the laborious Dr Le-land, in his work "On the necessity of a divine revelation," and by Dr Ellis, in his "Knowledge of divine things from revelation only." The heathen sages had ample time allowed them to find out the knowledge of God ; they were not deficient in natural genius ; they were laborious and persevering in their researches, and availed themselves of the exertions of others when they had opportunity ; yet it is certain, they were very far from attaining the object of their search.—The Epicureans denied the *providence* of God ; the Stoics imagined he was controlled by *fate* ; Aristotle himself supposed that the world was eternal ; and even those who had the most correct views, speak of *gods* in the plural number, or leave the fact of his existence uncertain. Even Socrates died recommending an act of idolatry.* They appear to have had very faint conceptions of the holiness and justice of the Deity, who was to them, after all, the object of reverence rather than of love. In Cicero's work, *De Natura Deorum*, we have a melancholy picture of the weakness of human reason, and of the unsatisfactory nature of their reasonings on this momentous subject. As to a place of future *punishment*, the opinion of Pythagoras seems to have been but too general :

Quid Styga, quid tenebras, quid nomina vana timetis ?

Materiem vatum, falsique piacula mundi ?—OVID, b. 15. f. 3.

"Why do you fear the infernal lake, or darkness, or empty
"names ?

"The subject of poets, and the atonements of an imaginary
"world ?"

* "Ὁ Κριτων εφη, τῷ Ασκληπιῷ οφειλομεν αλεκτερονα."

"We owe a cock, O Crito, to Æsculapius."

Yet some would persuade us of the sufficiency of human reason to discover the truths of religion, not only in defiance of all past history, but in contradiction to *known fact*. In no part of the world where revelation is unknown, is the true character of God maintained. On this point, the refined and ingenious Chinese are equally ignorant with the degraded Hottentots. The *wisdom of God* is displayed in thus leaving men to their own investigations, to shew the insufficiency of reason to guide them to eternal happiness; to prove the depravity of human nature when left to itself, to manifest the necessity of a revelation from heaven, and to establish the divine origin of Christianity. Accordingly, that which all the boasted systems of philosophy could not effect, was accomplished by means of the *foolishness of preaching*, by an instrument apparently weak and inadequate; by a scheme which human reason never could have contrived or imagined, and which yet, now that it is revealed, approves itself to be divine; the redemption of the world by Christ Jesus—this alone proves effectual to save them that believe. By the simple preaching of plain unlettered men, thousands were rescued from ignorance and vice, and made wise, holy, and happy.

This naturally leads to the enquiry, what prevented the Gospel from being *universally embraced*? The carnal prejudices of the Jews, and the pride of the Gentiles: 22. "For the Jews demand (*aislouci*) a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." It was natural for the Jews to require a *miracle* to prove the truth of Christianity. In this way the Mosaic economy had been established;—and was no evidence of this kind afforded them? Yes; our Saviour performed many illustrious miracles in *their presence*; his Apostles confirmed their testimony by the same evidence. The fact of our Lord's resurrection, and the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, ought to have satisfied their minds of the truth of Christianity; but their thoughts were so *preoccupied* with views of temporal grandeur; they had so thoroughly persuaded themselves that the Messiah would appear as an earthly conqueror, that they despised the benevolent and unostentatious miracles of Christ and his apostles, or ascribed them to the power of evil spirits—they demanded a *sign from heaven*, such a proof as was suited to their natural prejudices: they looked for a literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel, (chap. vii. 13.) that the Messiah would appear in the *clouds of heaven*, and receive extensive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; in a word, they expected that the

kingdom of God would come with *outward shew*. On the other hand, the Greeks were in search of some new *theory of virtue*, that would gratify their reasoning powers, and accommodate itself to their natural propensities, decorated with the pompous title of wisdom. But *the Apostle*, unmoved by their cavils, and unawed by their threatenings, continued to proclaim the word of the cross. 23, 24, "We preach *Christ crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." He had but one doctrine for the learned and the ignorant, for the self-righteous and the vicious. Though he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and had obtained a perfect knowledge of the law, he did not gratify the taste of the Jews by ingenious glosses on the prophetic writings; though he was not unacquainted with the systems of heathen philosophy, as appears from his disputing with the different sects in Greece; (Acts xvii. 17, 18.) and though he seems to have read their most celebrated writers, (chap. xv. 33. ; Titus i. 12.) he did not amuse the Greeks with plausible speculations on the secrets of nature, or the origin of things; but he dwelt on the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; even those that are most offensive to the carnal mind. He declared that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised to the fathers, and the only mediator between God and man; that he had died on the *cross*, as a propitiatory sacrifice, to atone for the sins of men, and to declare the righteousness of God; and he exhorted all men every where, to repent and to believe in the only Saviour. In publishing this doctrine, he used great plainness of speech. He simply stated facts, and allowed them to speak for themselves: He used no meretricious ornaments of style; no studied arrangement of argument. Now such a doctrine was a *stumbling-block* to the Jews. As already noticed, they supposed that their Messiah would appear as a mighty conqueror, to deliver them from the Roman yoke, to enrich their nation with the spoils of the world, and to bring all people under the authority of the Mosaic law: they stumbled at the doctrine of a crucified Saviour. They looked on those who suffered on a cross, as accursed of God. Jesus of Nazareth had no form or comeliness in their estimation. They were *scandalized* at the doctrine respecting the abrogation of the Mosaic law, and the calling of the Gentiles. They were ignorant of God's method of justification by faith, and went about to establish their

own righteousness ; and therefore, " they stumbled at that stumbling-stone, as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence ; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Rom. ix. 32, 33.

To the *Greeks* the preaching of the cross was *foolishness*. They despised the Jews as a rude and illiterate people ; they considered them as enemies to mankind, on account of their peculiar rites. They viewed our Saviour as an illiterate Jewish peasant, who was unacquainted with the doctrines of their celebrated sages, and had been ignominiously put to death for sedition. They were ignorant of the character of God, as infinitely holy, just and true ; of the spirituality of his law ; of their situation as depraved and guilty creatures ; consequently, they did not perceive the necessity of an atonement. They idolized the powers of reason, and derided the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel as foolishness.

Very different is the estimate formed of this doctrine by *those who are called*.—The persons here said to be called, must refer to those who are chosen by divine grace, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit ; for many enjoy the *external* call of the Gospel to whom it continues a stumbling-block and foolishness. Those who are taught of God, *whether Jews or Gentiles*, laying aside their former prejudices, vicious habits, and self-righteous hopes, receive the word of reconciliation with joy, as equally necessary for both, and equally free to both. They perceive in the Gospel evident marks of divine *power* and *wisdom*. The word *Christ* may here mean either the doctrine of the cross as before, (ver. 18.) or the person and character of Christ. The *former* seems chiefly intended. Now the Gospel exhibits the power of God, not only in the illustrious miracles by which it was confirmed, and the remarkable success attending its promulgation, but especially in foiling all the designs of Satan, and all the opposition of the world ; thus Christ is said to have spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross, Col. ii. 15. It overthrew the empire of superstition and ignorance ; it delivers men as well from the power as from the guilt of sin ; it raises them from the depths of misery to the height of glory and blessedness ; they are themselves the monuments of its power. It has triumphed over all the malice, all the power and wit of man ; and the utmost efforts of persecution and infidelity have never been able to undermine its truth, or to arrest its progress. It presents the most effectual motives to a life of holiness.

The Gospel also displays the manifold *wisdom* of God, in its admirable adaptation to the moral condition and spiritual wants of man. It harmonizes all the divine perfections in the forgiveness of sin ; it secures the honour of the moral law, the glory of God, the love and obedience of the believer, the admiration of all holy and intelligent creatures. Even the angels desire to look into it. (Eph. iii. 10. ; 1 Pet. i. 12.)

So the power and wisdom of God are displayed in the *person* of the Mediator, who is possessed of all the perfections of God, and of all the sympathies of man. He manifested his glory in the miracles which he performed ; and in the offices which he sustains, he exerts almighty power. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—never man spake like him—never was so sublime a system taught, or such an admirable character exhibited ; hence he is able both to govern and to protect his church, to guide his people in the way that they should go, and to save them to the uttermost.

It is agreeable to the ordinary dispensations of Providence to accomplish the most stupendous effects by the most simple means. The vast system of the universe is upheld by the laws of gravitation and attraction. In the same manner, in the dispensations of grace, He renders the unadorned preaching of the Gospel more effectual in securing the true happiness of man, than any of the vaunted schemes of human philosophy. That very doctrine which appears *foolishness* to the world, is found to be more sublime in its nature than all their boasted theories ; it can produce effects which all the power of earthly governments, and all the wisdom of legislators, have failed to accomplish. It renews the *heart* and transforms the *character* of man ; and these effects it produces even when wielded by the feeblest instruments. 25. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." There is nothing like weakness or folly in the Gospel scheme, or in any of the works of God : but the Apostle adopts the contemptuous language of the opponents of Christianity, to turn it back upon themselves. *They esteemed* it foolishness : well, allowing it to be so, yet it is wiser than the inventions of men. They despised the *weakness* of its preachers, yet their *foolish preaching* was more powerful than all the eloquence and rhetoric of the schools.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The scheme of redemption bears *intrinsic evidence* of its heavenly origin, as the only conceivable way in which the righteousness and the mercy of God could meet together in the pardon of sinful men. It bears the stamp of truth in the effects which it has produced, independently altogether of external evidence.

2. The doctrine of the cross is the grand instrument of converting souls; hence the importance of dwelling frequently on this topic, as the most affecting and august display of the love of God.

3. The Gospel is still viewed as foolishness by the proud *speculatist*; it is yet a stumbling-block to the *self-righteous* and the *worldly minded*. But those who reject the gospel *perish* in their sins!

SECTION FOURTH.—VERSES 26—31.

THE DESIGN OF GOD IN CALLING THOSE THAT ARE DESPISED.

THE Apostle had shewn the incompetency of unassisted reason to arrive at a right knowledge of God, and the marks which the Gospel bears of the wisdom and power of its divine Author. Its heavenly origin is further conspicuous, if we consider the *effects* which it has produced on the human character, and the instruments employed in making it known to the world. 26—29. "For ye see (or see ye βλέπετε) your calling (κλήσιν) brethren, that not many wise men according to (κατά) the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (are called) but God hath chosen the foolish things (μωρα) of the world that he might confound (κατασκευάζειν put to shame) the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, that he might shame the strong (ισχυρα) and the base things (αγια) of the world, and the things that are despised (εξουθενημένα) hath God chosen, and the things that are not (τα μη οντα) that he might bring to nought (καταργήσει abolish) the things that are, that no flesh should glory before him (ὀνομαζοι αὐτον). The Apostle

puts these adjectives in the *neuter* gender, still more to depreciate the characters spoken of, and to heighten our conceptions of the sovereign grace of God.

Two views have been taken of this passage. The sentence is elliptical; the words "are called" being supplemental. Some give an *active* sense to the words, and read "not many noble; &c. call you;" and this must be allowed to be more agreeable to the main scope of the argument, which is to reprove the Corinthians for their undue attachment to human philosophy, by shewing that those who were called to preach the Gospel, possessed no external accomplishments, either of rank, or birth, or extraordinary talent. They were not the instruments which men would naturally have employed, and their success must be attributed mainly to the power of God, and not to their personal qualifications. There were not many among them whom the world would have considered as *wise*: if we except the Apostle Paul, few of the primitive preachers were skilled either in Jewish or in heathen literature; nor did they possess any uncommon originality or acuteness of mind; nor were they endowed with any extraordinary powers of eloquence. They could not be ranked with the *mighty* or powerful; they had neither fleets nor armies at command, with which to undertake so difficult an enterprize as the subjugation of the world—they had neither wealth nor influence, to enable them to effect any moral revolution in the views or character of men—they were few in number, and poor in circumstances—their natural disposition was timid and retiring, and so far from having any countenance or support from the established authorities, the whole ecclesiastical and civil power was exerted to oppose them—they were not distinguished by the splendour of their birth, or the *nobility* of their ancestors—they were selected from the most obscure ranks of life—fishermen, publicans, or tent-makers, who had spent their life in toiling for their daily subsistence. No persons, in fact, could have seemed more unfit to contend with the learning, religion, and civil authorities of this world. Yet these were the individuals who had, under God, been appointed to propagate the Christian faith. It was to persons of this description, that the Corinthians themselves owed all their present privileges, and all their hopes for eternity; and therefore it did not become them to set so high a value on those outward advantages, which were of so little account in the sight of God.

For he had, in the exercise of his divine sovereignty, *chosen* those who were esteemed as the *foolish things* of the world to *confound the wise*. All the power and subtilty of the Jewish *sanhedrim* were baffled by Peter and James and John; and the plausible reasonings of the Greek philosophers were refuted by Paul and his fellow-labourers. Those who were despised as deluded enthusiasts and *vain babblers*, were honoured to publish such an admirable system of truths, as could never have been invented by all the ingenuity of the most admired sages, for their Lord gave them a mouth and wisdom which their enemies could not gainsay or resist. Those who appeared *weak* and feeble, on account of their want of influence,—not only plain unlettered men, but persons of the weaker sex, and of the most tender age, by their exemplary conduct, their patient labours, and their heroic fortitude under the most cruel sufferings,—were chosen to be *fellow-helpers* in the propagation of Christianity, by their preaching or their death, to confound the *mighty* who did not know the spring of divine consolation from which they were supplied, and who could not see the invisible arm by which they were sustained. Those whom the world considered *base* on account of the meanness of their birth, and the obscurity of their station, or who were despised on account of the disreputable employments they had formerly pursued, or the immoral lives which they had once led, became useful members of society, and were honoured to effect the most salutary change on the character of others; nay, those who, as *Gentiles by birth*, were considered by the Jews as morally dead, as having *no existence* in comparison with them, were selected to bring to nought the proud pharisee and the self-sufficient moralist. Thus every scheme that had been devised by men for the welfare of the species, was thrown into the shade; and the names of those who stood highest in the rolls of science or of fame, were eclipsed by a few simple mechanics. And the great *design* of this arrangement was, *that no flesh might glory in the divine presence*—that the world might see that the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong—that the preachers of the gospel might be taught that their success was not owing to any intellectual superiority of theirs, and that those who were converted by them might be kept from glorying in *feeble flesh*, or from giving that honour to the creature which is the sole *prerogative of the almighty Agent*. In short, “that he who glorieth, might glory in the Lord.”

The sentiment in the passage is also true in the other sense above alluded to, "See your calling (της κλησεως υμων) brethren; consider what sort of persons have been called among you."* The first converts to Christianity were generally persons of inferior rank, and the Corinthians had formerly been immersed in idolatry and vice, chap. vi. 11. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The very simplicity of the Gospel serves to hide it from the *wise* and prudent in their own eyes. They busy themselves in investigating the works of nature, but they are seldom, from these, "led up to nature's God." The attention of the *mighty* is engrossed with schemes of ambition, or with political speculations; the voice of flattery conceals from them the knowledge of their true character, and the pomp of earthly grandeur makes them conceive a distaste for the humbling and self-denying doctrines of the cross. The *noble* are exposed to the same temptations. They cannot think of parting with the pleasures of sin, or of stooping from their elevated station, to cast in their lot with the humble followers of the Lamb. But God selects the *foolish ones* of the world to make them wise unto salvation—the *weak* he furnishes with strength and fortitude to overcome surrounding temptations. He chooses those *that are despised* on account of their poverty, to enrich them with the treasures of grace; and the young and ignorant, he guides, by his Holy Spirit, into the way of life: the *poor* have the Gospel preached to them, and praise is perfected out of the mouth of babes. Thus we may often meet with an humble christian in an obscure situation, who has more experimental knowledge of the Gospel, than those who have made the Scriptures the study of their lives; and young children have attained such a deep acquaintance with divine truth, as has silenced and confounded the proud infidel. The *reason* is, they are taught of God; and the *design* is, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

Yet there is nothing in the doctrines of the Gospel, to justify the neglect or rejection of it by the wise and the noble. It is, in itself, an object of contemplation sufficiently interesting and important, to engage the serious attention of the most refined and cultivated minds. Though not *many* noble are usually called by divine grace, there have been a few such in every age, who have not been ashamed of the gospel of Christ; these have been raised

* Thus Beza, "Cernitis enim vocationem vestram, fratres; vos videlicet non esse multos sapientes," &c.

up to protect the servants of God by their power, and to aid them with their substance. None are excluded from mercy on *account of their birth or talents*; and persons of every rank stand in need of pardoning grace. All that is required is, that no one should *glory* in any personal distinction as the ground of his acceptance with God, whether wealth, learning, eloquence, religious privileges, or virtuous dispositions. We read of some noble persons who avowed their attachment to the Gospel from the beginning, Joseph of Arimathea, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, the deputy of Achaia, the most excellent Theophilus, and the elect Lady of whom the beloved apostle has made honourable mention, (2d Epistle.) To these may be added the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia, Dionysius the Areopagite, Cornelius the Roman centurion, and others. The insinuation of Gibbon, therefore, that the first converts were persons of low rank, or of *doubtful morals*, is not strictly correct. But even were it true, it would only enhance the power of the Gospel to enlarge their minds, and to reform their conduct, (See Watson's Apology for Christianity, Letter 4.) It was natural to suppose that persons in inferior circumstances would be less under the influence of prejudice, than the learned and the great; but *after all*, even *their* conversion is resolved into an act of sovereignty on the part of Him, "who calleth those things that are not as though they were." Rom. iv. 17.

A striking illustration of this passage is afforded by the labours of missionaries among the heathen, in the present day. We may just specify the amazing revolution which is now taking place in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. By the labours of a few pious and zealous men, supported by no civil power, and distinguished, not so much by their learning and genius, as by their devoted attachment to the cause of pure religion, the cruel, licentious, and idolatrous inhabitants of Otaheite, have been brought under the influence of divine truth, and are now adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour; and those, who a few years ago appeared base and contemptible in the scale of humanity, are now set free and ennobled by the truth. And none would be more ready to acknowledge, than the excellent persons who have been employed as the instruments, that this triumph has been effected, not by any power or might of theirs, but by the Spirit of God.

So far from having any reason to boast of their own accom-

plishments, the Apostle reminds the Corinthians, that all the spiritual blessings they enjoyed, were the gift of God through Jesus Christ. 30. "From him (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made to us, from (ἀπὸ) God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." It was by the grace of God that they had been chosen in Christ Jesus, and united to him by faith and love; and in conformity to the gracious purposes and divine appointment of the Father, Christ is constituted the author and finisher of salvation to his people—their hope, their strength, and consolation. Whatever they stand in need of, is found in him; and his various offices and gifts are admirably adapted to their situation. Are we naturally *ignorant* of spiritual things, strangers to the character and will of God, to our own circumstances, and to the way of salvation? He is our *wisdom*. As the prophet and guide of the church, he illuminates our understanding by his word and Spirit, and removes our natural prejudice and hardness of heart; Matt. xi. 27. The knowledge of Christ is also our true wisdom; that in comparison of which all other science is lighter than vanity, and for the sake of which we must esteem all things but dross and dung. Are we, *as sinners*, under the sentence of God's holy law, unable to work out a righteousness of our own, and chargeable with a debt which we should never be able to pay? He is our *Righteousness*, or justification (δικαιοσύνη); he has satisfied all the demands of divine justice on our behalf; he has magnified the law and made it honourable; "he was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And in this manner, "as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be constituted righteous." Thus he is called by Jeremiah, the Lord our Righteousness, and Isaiah says of him; "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Is. xlv. 24. Such expressions seem plainly to teach us, that the obedience of our Surety is reckoned to our account—is *imputed to believers*, in consequence of which they are fully absolved from guilt, and receive a title to eternal life. Many object to this doctrine, as if it were impossible to impute moral qualities to another; but we do not say that there is any transfusion of Christ's righteousness into our souls, so as to make it *identically* ours; we only maintain, that the *benefits* of it are transferred, so as to make it *legally* ours. Dr

Macknight says, that Christ is our righteousness, "because he is the author of the righteousness of faith, and because, on his account, God counts men's faith for righteousness." Were this the Apostle's meaning, he would not have said that *Christ* is made unto us righteousness, but rather *faith*. Faith itself justifies only as it *receives* the righteousness of the Saviour; if it justified as a *condition*, we should still have something whereof to glory. Some explain the word *righteousness*, as if it referred to the operations of divine grace on the heart; but this is to confound justification with sanctification, which the Apostle carefully distinguishes. Those, however, who receive a *title* to heaven, are also made *meet* for it, and therefore Christ is farther said to be made unto us *sanctification* (*ἀγιοσύνη*). This he is, as being the source and medium of evangelical holiness: those who believe are regenerated by his Spirit, to a new and heavenly life. By union to him as their *head*, strength is diffused through all the members of his mystical body. He lives in them, and enables them, by his grace, to mortify the deeds of the body, and to overcome the love of the world; he transforms them into his own image, so that they put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Thus, though righteousness is *imputed*, holiness is *imparted*. In fine, he is made unto us *redemption*, (*ἀπολυτρώσις*) by completing our deliverance from sin, and removing all the effects of the curse. Not only does he glorify the *spirits* of the just, but he shall also quicken their mortal *bodies*, and raise them to glory, honour, and immortality, even eternal life. Thus he is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the all in all in our salvation: "*In him* all the seed of Israel are justified, and *shall glory*;" and thus the purpose of God is accomplished, 31. "As it is written, (Isaiah xlv. 25.) he that glorieth (*καυχώμενος* boasteth,) let him glory in the Lord." According to others, this is a quotation from Jeremiah ix. 23. "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord," &c. The application of such passages to our Saviour, clearly intimates his essential Deity. According to the Arian and Socinian schemes, to glory in Christ, would not be to glory in *the Lord*, but in a created being, in an

arm of flesh: The very thing which we are forbidden to do. But admitting that he is, as his name implies, Jehovah our Saviour, the Lord our Righteousness; then it is easy to understand, that in rejoicing in Christ Jesus, we have no confidence in the flesh. In *this* case, we cannot too highly esteem, or too much exalt, the Divine Redeemer. *Then* he is worthy of all honour and glory and blessing. The same quotation is made, 2 Epistle, chap. x. 17.

"Possessing Christ, I all possess,
Wisdom and strength and righteousness,
And sanctity complete;
Bold in his name, I dare draw nigh
Before the Ruler of the sky,
And all his justice meet."

REFLECTIONS.

1. The propagation of the Gospel by such feeble instruments, demonstrates its divine origin. The religion of Mahomet was propagated by the sword. In *this* case, the cause was adequate to the effect. The religion of Christ, had it not been of God, must long ago have come to nothing. Some have injudiciously magnified the learning and eloquence of Paul, to the manifest injury of the cause of Christianity, and in direct opposition to his own assertions and design. (See on this subject Dr Bogue's Essay on the Divine authority of the New Testament, chap. 7.)

2. Let us beware of attaching undue importance to human instruments. How little is effected by the most elaborate and eloquent addresses of *unconverted men*; and how often are the humble efforts of pious individuals, who make no pretensions to superior abilities or uncommon learning, crowned with unlooked-for success, in the conversion of sinners! Do we despise learning? No! but we would not *confide* in it. Nor would we discourage or forbid the labours of the weakest instrument in the cause of Christ. And we desire ever to keep in mind, that all our success must depend on the blessing of God. May he accompany the preaching of the cross, in every place, with the influences of his Holy Spirit!

3. The offices of Christ must not be separated. To all those to whom he is made righteousness, he is also made sanctification. May we never cease to glory in Him, and may we receive out of his fulness grace upon grace!

CHAPTER II.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—5.

PAUL'S MANNER OF PREACHING.

THE ancient Greeks were much attached to the science of philosophy and the art of eloquence. The philosophers were divided into various sects, who disputed against the opinions of each other with great vehemence, and brought forward many plausible arguments for and against the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, on the foundation of virtue, and the summum bonum, or *chief good*. The art of logic supplied each party with the weapons of controversy. Among the Grecian states, the art of public speaking was carried to great perfection. All political questions were discussed in popular assemblies, and frequently the existence of their civil liberties was suspended on the talents of their leading orators. Prizes were appropriated to eloquence and poetry, at their public games; and princes were not ashamed to enter the lists with the competitors for the rewards of literary eminence. The courts of justice opened a wide field for the display of oratory; and even the general at the head of his army, harangued his troops in a studied speech, previous to engaging in battle. Hence the greatest attention was paid to the rhetorical art, by all who desired the applause of their country. Schools were instituted for the instruction of youth in grammar and in logic. They were taught in what manner to arrange their discourse to the greatest advantage,—how to persuade the judgment and to move the passions. Not only did they study to acquire a flowing and easy style, but they were taught the most graceful gestures; they were careful to correct every defect in their elocution, and even the modulations of the voice were regulated with the utmost exactness. The beautiful and copious language of Greece, afforded every facility for the acquisition of oratory. The speakers prepared their discourses with great diligence, and selected every topic which they thought might excite

the applause and move the feelings of their audience. Some of these wonderful productions still remain, a lasting proof of the taste and refinement of the people of that age. It is well known what pains Demosthenes took to overcome his natural defects as a speaker; Isocrates spent so much time in polishing his sentences, that they may be almost read as poetry; and long after the Greeks had lost their valour in the field, they continued to hold the undisputed empire of eloquence. Even "the mighty masters of the world" resorted, in great numbers, to the cities of Greece for the study of letters.

It is necessary to keep these things in view, in order to have a right conception of the difficulties under which the Apostle laboured in introducing the Gospel into Corinth. He had shewn that it was the design of God to set at nought the wisdom of man, by choosing the most humble instruments for the propagation of Christianity, that it might more clearly appear to owe its success to the special interposition of Heaven, and that no flesh might glory in his presence. This he further illustrates by a reference to his own case. 1. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellence (*καθ' ὑπεροχὴν*) of speech or of wisdom, declaring (*καταγγέλλων*) to you the testimony of God." By the excellence of *speech*, he refers to the art of eloquence; and by the excellence of *wisdom*, to the speculations of philosophy. The very circumstance of Paul being a native Jew, must have excited a prejudice against him on the part of the high-minded Greeks. His language must necessarily have partaken of the Hebrew idiom, to such an extent as to deprive it of that harmonious sweetness, so much affected by the Grecian orators. From what he afterwards says of himself (2 Ep. chap. x. 10.) it would appear that his personal presence was by no means commanding; and perhaps what he calls "a thorn in the flesh," was some bodily infirmity which injured the effect of his public speaking, (Gal. iv. 14.) Although, therefore, his language was not *barbarous*, or his manner *rude*, as some have insinuated, he was by no means fitted to compete with the professed orators of the Grecian school. It is also to be observed, that the multiplicity of his engagements would have prevented him, had he been so inclined, from polishing his discourses with the same care which *they* employed; and though he spoke by inspiration, he was, like other inspired persons, left to the exercise of his own particular talents

and manner. In his *writings* we often discover great force of reasoning and beauty of language; but in his public discourses, he seems to have been more desirous to *edify* than to please, (chap. xiv. 19.) which might give an appearance of negligence to his language. Hence his enemies objected, that though "his letters were weighty and powerful, his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible." And as he thus disclaims all pretensions to excellence of *speech*, so neither did he affect the excellence of *wisdom*. Though, as we have already shewn, he was not deficient in the knowledge of the prevailing systems of philosophy, and was aware of the taste and prejudices of the Greeks, he did not seek to amuse their fancy with any new theory of virtue, which, however beautiful and plausible, would have left them just as *before*, without producing any salutary change on their conduct, "for he determined not to know (*sidevrat*) any thing among them, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 2. The *subject* of his preaching, therefore, no less than his manner, was calculated to excite the prejudices of his hearers. These, as we have already shewn, consisted of *two* classes—the resident Jews, and the native Greeks. It is of the latter especially he speaks in this passage, to whom this doctrine appeared foolishness. It is not of course meant that this was the *only* topic on which he discoursed. Even from *this Epistle*, it is evident he taught them many other important truths. But he dwelt on *this* chiefly, as the *centre* in which all the lines of Christian doctrine converge. It is *that* which gives to the whole system its beauty and consistency. He not only preached *Jesus Christ* in his prophetic and kingly characters, but he exhibited him as the great High Priest of our profession, who died on *the cross* as a sacrifice for sin. So far was he from concealing this fact, that he gloried in the cross of Christ, and counted all things but loss in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Jesus his Lord. He knew that no other doctrine could purify the conscience, subdue the obduracy and pride of the heart, restore peace to the troubled mind, or draw forth the affections towards God. The stupendous fact, that the Creator of all things became *man*, and expired on the shameful cross, to save the guilty children of men, is such an overpowering display of infinite wisdom and boundless love—presents the divine character in a light at once so venerable and attractive—displays so clearly the malignity of sin, and lays such

a sure foundation of hope for the guilty, that the more fully it is exhibited, it is the more fitted to convert the soul to God. It stands in need of no foreign ornament to enhance its excellence. It can derive no additional glory from the researches of human philosophy, or the trappings of heathen oratory. The more simple the statement is, it is the more majestic and impressive. This is the *testimony of God*, which ought neither to be concealed, nor modified nor adorned. This is the only doctrine that is suited to the capacity and circumstances of every sinner; the only preaching which will be honoured with success by the Holy Spirit; *that alone* which, in fact, has ever been attended with saving and lasting effects. Witness the failure of the Jesuits in China, and the success of the Moravians in Greenland.* Leave out the doctrine of the *atonement*, and the Christian system is placed on a level with the schemes of human philosophy. What then becomes of the justice of God? how shall his law be magnified, and the rights of his government maintained, in the pardon of the guilty? What is left, to humble the pride of man, to convince of sin, to warm the heart with gratitude to God, to overcome the love, the pleasures, and the fear of the world? It was the consideration of *this* which made the Apostle determine to know nothing else. It was not from ignorance of any other topic, that he made this resolution; it was from *choice*. Some translate the word *υδναι*, to *make known*. This however is not its most natural meaning. The fact is, the doctrine in question engrossed the whole attention of the Apostle. Not only could he *preach* on nothing else, but he chose to converse and to meditate upon it. It inflamed his whole heart, and made every other subject appear subordinate or tasteless.

3. He further observes, that he "was with them (*προς υμας*) in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling (*εν τρομῳ πολλῳ*)."
He no doubt enjoyed much happiness in his own mind, while engaged in the service of Christ. The consideration of his own interest in the Saviour's love, of the truth and excellence of the Gospel, and of the blessed effects it had produced on those who believed, the assurance he had of the love and prayers of his christian friends, and the anticipation of the crown of victory awaiting him at the great day, strengthened and encouraged him

* See Brown's History of Missions, vol. I. p. 295.

under every difficulty, But at *this time*, there were many circumstances that were fitted to cast him down. The opposition which he met with from the unbelieving Jews, Acts xviii. 6; the prejudice of the philosophical Greeks against the religion of Jesus; the deplorable situation of the inhabitants of Corinth, devoted to idolatry and vice, and in full pursuit of the pleasures of the world; the consciousness he had of his own weakness, his deep views of the depravity of the human heart, and of the power and subtilty of Satan; the awful responsibility attached to his office, the guilt of neglecting immortal souls, and the solemnities of a future judgment—were all calculated to fill his mind with the most painful apprehensions, and to lead him to cry for an increase of faith and fortitude. We find the greatest prophets trembling at the magnitude of their undertaking, when sent to proclaim the will of God to men,—witness the case of Moses, of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jonah. The Apostle on another occasion, when he came in sight of the imperial city, seems to have felt his heart sinking within him; and not till he saw the brethren, who came to meet him, did he thank God and take courage, (Acts xxviii. 15.) He seems to have laboured under the same depression of spirits in the refined and voluptuous city of Corinth, till the Lord stood by him and strengthened him, as already noticed. Acts xviii. 9, 10.

4. But there was an excellent treasure in this earthen vessel; his preaching was attended with greater power, than the utmost efforts of unsanctified genius could have produced. "My discourse (*λογος*) and my preaching (*κηρυγμα*) was not with persuasive words of human wisdom (*ἢ πύθοις ἀνθρώπινης σοφίας λόγοις*), but with (*ἢ*) demonstration (*ἀποδείξι*, proof) of the Spirit and of power." The persuasive words of man's wisdom might be necessary to give weight to a subject otherwise trifling, or plausibility to one that was doubtful; but they were as often employed in defence of falsehood as of truth, and frequently imposed on the judgment, in order to secure a blind acquiescence in the views of the orator. *Here* the arts of sophistry were not required; the testimony of Paul was enforced by another kind of demonstration. Some have thought that the *proof of the Spirit* here spoken of, refers to the miracles wrought by the Apostle in confirmation of the Gospel, and the spiritual gifts imparted to the new converts. But many saw the miracles who were not converted; and the miraculous gifts were only conferred on some, and could not be a proof to all; neither

were they always the sign of spiritual life. Some, again, suppose he refers to the fulfilment of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; this, however, was rather a token to the *Jews*, though it would no doubt serve to strengthen the faith of the *converted Gentiles*; and there are many who are acquainted with the argument from prophecy, whose faith, after all, rests on the wisdom of man. But the proof here spoken of, seems chiefly to apply to that *powerful illumination* and conviction produced on the mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the preaching of the word. Thus the Apostle reminds the Thessalonians, that "the Gospel came to them not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance;" and Peter observes, that the Gospel was preached to the believing strangers "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." This he afterwards explains, by reminding them, that "they had obeyed the truth *through the Spirit*." (1 Epis. i. 12, 22.) Thus, while the Apostles addressed the truth to the understanding and to the conscience, the Holy Spirit awakened the one and enlightened the other. The gospel, as an *instrument*, is quick and powerful, adapted to the moral faculties of man; but it requires to be applied by the Spirit, just as wax must be softened by heat, before it can receive the impression of the seal. This is agreeable to what our Lord says respecting the office of the Spirit: "He shall reprove, or convince, the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." (John xvi. 8.) In *this manner* were the Corinthians induced to receive the word of the cross. It came with a *power*, from the lips of the humble instrument, that they could not withstand. It demolished all their carnal prejudices and rooted hostility. It commended itself to their conscience, opened the chambers of imagery within, "convinced them of all, and judged them of all:" it proved itself to be the power of God for their salvation. They looked on *him* whom they had pierced, and mourned under a sense of sin; they looked, and rejoiced that a suitable remedy was provided. It was not *merely* the evidence of miracles, or the evidence of prophecy, that produced their faith, but the demonstration which the state of their hearts gave to the outward testimony, when convinced of sin, and brought under the purifying influence of the Gospel, by the agency of the Divine Spirit. 5. Thus *their faith did not stand or exist (π) in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God*. They had doubtless heard many more eloquent

and polished speakers than Paul ; but never were words attended with so much energy ; never did message appear so truly momentous : he seemed to speak "in thoughts that breathed and words that burned." This heavenly word, like a sharp two-edged sword, pierced to the soul and spirit, and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of their hearts. From the day they heard it, and knew the grace of God in truth, it produced corresponding fruits, in the renovation of their minds, and in the holiness and usefulness of their lives. Such a doctrine proved itself to be of God. It could never have been invented by man. It was no cunningly-devised fable, from which they had derived such pure and lasting peace. This is that *internal evidence* of which the Apostle John speaks. 1 Epis. v. 10. This is a proof which does not require any extensive knowledge of historical evidence. It is not confined to the age of miracles, it is accessible to men of every age, of all ranks, and in every part of the world. But it is an evidence peculiar to those that *believe*, and it must ever remain a mystery to those who are destitute of divine grace. (*See an admirable Essay on Divine Grace, by the late Mr John M' Laurin of Glasgow.*)

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn what should be the chief topic of the christian preacher,—Jesus Christ and him crucified. He must be proclaimed in the essential glory of his Deity—in the worth of his meritorious righteousness—as the supreme lawgiver and head of his church—as the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. The doctrine of the cross must be preached with earnestness, simplicity and affection. No historical details, no critical investigations, no controversial discussions, however ably conducted, must usurp the place of this. It must be the foundation of all *practical discourses*. Only from this altar can the sacred fire be brought to kindle the flame of love in the human heart. It is not surprising if the most eloquent moral essays, fail to produce the intended effect, where Christ crucified is not exhibited.

2. Whilst we preach the testimony of God, let us never forget that we are merely instruments in the hand of the Spirit ; and let our fervent prayers constantly ascend, that he would carry

demonstration to the heart of the hearers, and render the word the power of God to their salvation.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 6—11.

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE INFLUENCE.

THE Apostle, in allusion to the contemptuous language of the ancient Greeks, had denominated the Gospel *foolishness*, and had shewn how opposite are the counsels of God, to the boasted discoveries of heathen philosophy. He had also referred to his own style of preaching, as being very different from the artificial manner of the Grecian orators. But he did not mean to say that there is any thing in the doctrines of Christ *repugnant* to sound reason, or inconsistent with the conceptions which we naturally form of an infinitely perfect Being. 6. "But (αλλα) we speak wisdom among them that are perfect (οις τινεσ τελειαι)." These words are capable of two senses; they may either mean (as Dr Doddridge observes) that those who were fully instructed in the whole scheme of Christianity, would be able to discern and appreciate the evident proofs of divine wisdom displayed in the Gospel: or, that the Apostle communicated to those who were further advanced in the knowledge of spiritual truth, the more sublime mysteries of revelation. Accordingly, the first preachers, in addressing men, had respect to their varied circumstances and attainments. To *unbelievers* they unfolded the elements or first principles of christian doctrine. Of these an account is given, Heb. vi. 1, 2. as the foundation of the Gospel scheme, viz. the doctrine of "repentance from dead works, and faith towards God; the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." In addressing the disciples, on the other hand, they took a wider range of doctrine, and occasionally discoursed on the connexion between the scheme of providence and the dispensations of God towards his church—on the operations of divine sovereignty—on the necessity of spiritual influence—on the spiritual meaning of the types and ceremonies of the Levitical economy, as in the epistle to the Hebrews—on the rise and consummation of the

mystery of iniquity—on the life of faith in the Son of God—on the privileges of believers, and on the prospects of the heavenly world. These topics he seems to refer to here, under the name of *wisdom*. In the next chapter, he speaks of them as *strong meat*, in opposition to the first principles, which he calls *milk*. The same distinction occurs in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, verses 13, 14. To have introduced the more advanced points of doctrine to the notice of the *world* at large, might have excited unnecessary prejudice in their minds, or proved a stumbling-block to the weak. This distinction ought still to be observed in preaching to different classes of hearers; although in a country professing Christianity, it may be necessary to advert to every point of doctrine, in order to correct the most common mistakes respecting them. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that the word *τελειος*, “perfect,” is used in very different senses in Scripture. Sometimes it denotes absolute perfection, or the entire absence of all moral defect, as when it is applied to God; sometimes it signifies integrity as opposed to insincerity, “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.” At other times, it expresses a thorough acquaintance with christian doctrine. In this sense it is used Heb. v. 14. where it is rendered “persons of full age,” *strong meat belongeth to them that are perfect* (*τελειων*), that is, to those who, by use, have their senses, or perceptions, exercised to discern both good and evil.” It is employed by Greek writers, to describe those who were arrived at full manhood, and had passed through the whole course of discipline appropriated to youth. (See Xenophon’s *Cyropædia*, Book I.) It would also appear that the same word was applied to those who were fully initiated into the heathen mysteries. That it does not signify absolute moral perfection, when applied to christians, is evident from the way in which it is used, Phil. iii. 15. where the Apostle exhorts the *τελειων*, or *perfect*, to be like minded with him, who yet did not think he had attained, or was already *perfect*, ver. 12. Yet some have built on such expressions, the doctrine of sinless perfection, as the attainment of christians even in this life!

The wisdom which the Apostle referred to, was, however, of a very different nature from the systems that generally went under that name—It was “*not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers* (*αρχωντων*) *of this world, who are to be destroyed* (*καταργουμενων*).” Some, by the wisdom of this world, understand the systems of

philosophy as taught in the schools, and by that of the rulers of this world, the popular superstition which was supported by the civil magistrate. It is even maintained, that, by the rulers of this world, the Apostle means the spirits of darkness; but this seems inconsistent with what is said in the 8th verse, where the same phrase is evidently applied to those rulers who *put our Saviour to death*. I therefore think that, by the wisdom of this world, the Apostle means, as before, the speculations of philosophy; and by that of the rulers of this world, the opinions both of the Jewish scribes and priesthood, and of the heathen magistrates. These systems were very opposite in their principles and designs, to the wisdom which the Apostle taught. *That* brings glory to God, produces true peace of mind, purifies and exalts the soul, and leads to endless happiness. It is clear in all its discoveries, and unfolds the counsels of eternity respecting the destiny of man. The wisdom of this world, on the other hand, is conversant with earthly things: It bewilders its admirers in the mazes of error; it can afford no satisfactory rule or end of life; it elates the mind with pride and self-confidence, and throws uncertainty and doubt on all the realities of the invisible world. In fact, the things which are highly esteemed among *men* are an abomination in the sight of *God*. The discoveries of revelation, and the speculations of infidel philosophy, are frequently opposed to each other. And it is the design of Providence that their vaunted theories shall come to nothing. What one philosopher has established with great appearance of plausibility, another has demonstrated to be false.

Thus one scheme of natural religion, as it is called, has been successively demolished after another. How many great names have thus been buried in the rubbish of antiquity! Of others, how little is known but their follies and mistakes! And how often have the political schemes of the rulers of this world been overthrown by a surprising turn of events which their utmost capacity could not foresee!—Where are the Nebuchadnezzars, the Alexanders, and the Cæsars, who once filled the earth with the renown of their valourous deeds? “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” (Psal. cxlvi. 3, 4.) By the wisdom of the rulers of this world, the Apostle may also refer to the opinions of the Jewish rulers; or to those carnal schemes of aggrandise-

ment which they had formed, from a mistaken view of the Old Testament prophecies ; the Mosaic dispensation was now ready to vanish away, and the whole civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish nation was about to be *abolished*. This in due time shall be followed by the overthrow of every system of idolatry.

7. The doctrine which the Apostle taught was of heavenly origin. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery (*ἡ μυστία*) the hidden wisdom, which God predetermined (*προέσχετο*) before the ages (*ἔκ τῶν αἰώνων*) to our glory." He was commissioned to make known to the world that divine plan of mercy which had been formed and arranged in the counsels of God from eternity, by which he designed to save lost and perishing sinners, through the mediation and death of his own dear Son ; and to bring many sons and daughters to glory, out of all nations and people and tongues. This is a mystery which never could have been discovered by man ; but which, now that it is revealed, proves itself to be the result of infinite wisdom and boundless grace. Into this, even angels desire to look ; "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." This divine purpose was formed *before the foundation of the world* : Foreseeing the fall of man, He yet brought all things into existence, that he might glorify his mercy and grace in the recovery of apostate creatures. For any thing that we can see, his mercy would otherwise have had no room to exercise itself : A guilty and rebellious creature must be its object ; and he determined that this mercy should be displayed in unison with righteousness and truth. Accordingly, no sooner had man sinned, than a gracious intimation was given of his recovery, in the promise, that the "seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." The same encouragement was given to Noah, when the bow in the heavens was made the token of the covenant. The promise was renewed to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed ; and all the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation shadowed forth the redemption of the church by Christ Jesus : yet, this glorious truth was in some measure *hid* as with a vail, under types and figures. It was seen as through a glass, darkly, in the predictions of the prophets ; but to the Gentile world it was wholly unknown, till life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel ; then that *mystery*, which in other

ages was not made known to the sons of men, was at last revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." (Eph. iii. 4—6.) The word *mystery* is frequently used in scripture to signify that which is *concealed*, but which, when made known, is perfectly *intelligible*. At other times, it means that which must for ever remain above the comprehension of finite creatures, as when applied to the incarnation of Christ (1 Tim. iii. 16.) In this last sense it seems to be used here; for the "wisdom of God" refers not merely to the calling of the Gentiles, but to the whole scheme of redemption. It has been objected, that the expression (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων) does not imply proper *eternity*, but only describes the plan of mercy as formed at a time preceding the former dispensations; and it is thus paraphrased by Dr M'Knight, "which God predetermined before the Mosaic dispensation began." But other passages of scripture speak of our being chosen in Christ, "before the foundation of the world," (Ephes. i. 4.) and of our being called according to God's purpose of grace "which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. (πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων.) Hence the kingdom of heaven is said to have been prepared for the righteous, "from the foundation of the world," (ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.) Matt. xxv. 34. Thus Jehovah says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," (Jer. xxxi. 3.) The objects of this divine mercy—the means of their recovery—and the blessedness to which they were to be advanced, were all *fore-ordained* in the infinite mind of God. Some have maintained that the expression "to our glory," refers to the apostles themselves; and it is thus paraphrased by the same critic, which "should be spoken or explained by us apostles, to our great honour." But such an interpretation deprives the whole passage of its energy, and would in fact be in direct contradiction to what the Apostle had said before, that the design of God in choosing them to preach the gospel was, "that no flesh should glory in his presence."

This glorious plan was unknown to the great and the learned of mankind; "which (^{αὐτοὶ}) none of the princes or chiefs (ἀρχόντων) of this world knew, for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 8. None of the greatest sages of the

heathen world ever imagined that the Maker of all things would appear in human flesh to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The Roman governor of Judea was ignorant of divine revelation, and knew little of the doctrine or character of Christ; and the Jewish rulers and scribes; though they had the lively oracles in their hands, entirely misapprehended their main scope and design. Their carnal prejudices prevented them from beholding the glory of the only begotten of the Father, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst them. Hence, "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done." Acts iv. 26, 28. Accordingly the apostle Peter, in addressing his countrymen, says, "And now brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers," (chap. iii. 17.) In the same manner Paul, preaching to the Jews at Antioch, observes, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they *knew him not*, nor yet the voices of the prophets that are read every Sabbath day, have fulfilled them in condemning him." (chap. xiii. 27.) Thus, "he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world *knew him not*; he came to his own possessions, and his own people received him not." (John i. 10.) It is not to be imagined that, had the Jewish rulers and the heathen governor been aware of the dignity and glory of the humble prophet of Nazareth, they would have dared to put forth their hand against him; had they been capable of appreciating the excellence of his character and the benevolent design of his mission, they would have received him with the deepest reverence, and have put the highest honour upon him; but how then would the Scriptures have been fulfilled, that Christ must *suffer*, and be the first that should rise from the dead? It is true that Caiaphas the high priest prophesied that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." But this he uttered by the Spirit, while he evidently did not understand the meaning of his own prediction, and spoke from views of political expediency. (John xi. 49—52.) Pilate declared his conviction of our Saviour's innocence; but yet, to ingratiate himself with the Jews, delivered him up to their will. It was wisely

ordered in the providence of God, that the Saviour should appear in such a lowly disguise, as to leave room for the Jews to mistake his true character; while the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he performed, joined to the excellence of his life, left them *without excuse* in rejecting him. "Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain." The determination of God, which was *unknown to them*, was not the cause of their putting him to death, but their own malignant passions. Hence the circumstance of its being appointed, did not alter, in the least, the criminality of their actions. They acted with perfect freedom. This is taught by what Peter said on the day of Pentecost: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by *wicked hands* have crucified and slain." (Acts ii. 23.) Had he appeared in the *glory of his divine nature*, the rulers of this world would have had neither power nor inclination to oppose him; had he assumed an angelic form, he would have been incapable of the suffering of death; but he took on him the form of a servant, and the fashion of a man; he came to accomplish the great work of our redemption from sin and death; and they, being ignorant of the gracious purposes of God, crucified the Lord of glory. In a word, they fulfilled the counsels of Divine Wisdom *without intending it*. But how great a mystery is here! He who hung on the shameful cross was *the Lord of glory*! He who thus humbled himself, was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Though, in his divine nature, he was the ever-blessed and unchangeable Jehovah, the King eternal, immortal and invisible, yet such was the intimate connection between the divinity and humanity of Christ, that what is strictly true only of the *one*, is frequently applied to the *other*. Thus in the 20th chap. of the Acts, 28th verse, God is said to have purchased the church *with his own blood*; and in 1 John iii. 16. he is said to have *laid down his life for us*. When he became man, he did not cease to be God; and in the constitution of his glorious person, the two natures are inseparably and for ever united. Hence the sacrifice he offered up is of infinite value and efficacy; and the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin. Never did such apparently opposite qualities meet as in his blessed person; majesty and power were united to weakness and dishonour,

The greatest moral excellence was treated with ignominy and scorn. It has been said, that if virtue should descend on earth in a visible form, all men would be charmed with the sight. This was done in the person of Jesus Christ ; but such is the depravity of human nature, that instead of worshipping the assemblage of all Excellence, they exclaimed "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him, crucify him!" The divine character is so transcendently *amiable*, that it is fitted to excite the admiration and love of all intelligent beings ; but it is necessary that their minds should be free from any *corrupt bias*. In proportion to the degeneracy of any creature, will be the strength of his opposition to that which is supremely good. The title here given to our Saviour proves his essential deity. It is also applied to him by the apostle James, chap. ii. 1. A similar title is used in Ps. xxiv. where our Lord's ascension is predicted, and his proper divinity is asserted, "Who is the king of glory? the Lord of Hosts, he is the king of glory." (ver. 10.)

The Apostle had shewn that the princes of this world were ignorant of the plan of divine wisdom and mercy. He now proceeds a step further, and declares, that the admirable contrivance for the redemption of sinners revealed in the Gospel, never could have been conceived by the utmost stretch of human faculties. It was this which the prophet Isaiah had chiefly in view, when, speaking of the Saviour's advent, he exclaims, "for since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him;" chap. lxiv. 4. Without following the translation of the LXX, or giving a literal version of the Hebrew, the Apostle gives the *sense* of this passage in the 9th verse. "But as it is written, Those things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, *these* God hath prepared for them that love him." This passage is often explained of the glory of the heavenly state, and no doubt *that* is infinitely above our highest conceptions. But here it seems to include the whole scheme of mercy, which the researches of unassisted reason never could have discovered, and the beauty and excellence of which remain concealed from all unregenerate persons ; the things here referred to, form the substance of the apostolic testimony, as contained in the writings of the New Testament. Accordingly the Apostle

adds, 10. "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit;" whereas it is said of the happiness of heaven, "It does not yet appear what we shall be." And the words which Paul heard in Paradise he declares it was *unlawful* or impossible to utter. (2 Cor. xii. 4.) It is of the full revelation of the Gospel plan, that our Saviour says, (Mat. xiii. 16.) "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And truly, never did *eyes* behold so glorious a sight as the Lord of all, appearing in the form of a servant, to obey and suffer in the room of guilty men; never did the *ears* listen to so ravishing a sound, as the news of salvation through the blood of the Lamb; those glad tidings which bring glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will to men. Never did *heart* conceive so honourable a method for the harmonious display of justice and peace, mercy and truth, in the forgiveness of sin. The happiness which the Gospel brings *even now*, to them that love and obey it, passeth all understanding; the *joy* which they possess, in a sense of the love of God, is *unspeakable* and full of glory; and the *hope* which is laid up for them in store, embraces an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. But the *love of God* shed abroad in the heart, is the only solid evidence that we know the grace of God in truth.

Those interesting and delightful truths were *revealed* to the holy apostles *by the Spirit*, and by them made known to the world. Thus the promise of the Saviour was fulfilled, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth—he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," (John xiv. 26. xvi. 13.) The doctrine which they taught was not therefore the word of man, but the doctrine of God; and those who despised them, despised not *man*, but *God*, who had also given unto them his Holy Spirit, (1 Thess. iv. 8.) Our Lord, during his abode on earth, gradually opened the minds of his disciples to understand the Scriptures; but the grand revelation of the Gospel was made to them on that memorable day, when "there appeared cloven tongues as of fire, and sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other

tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," (Acts ii. 3, 4.) The apostles were thus competent witnesses to the truth; for the Spirit by which they were inspired, has a thorough knowledge not only of all that is in the heart of *man*, but of the whole profound scheme of providence and grace; "For the Spirit searcheth (*ἀνασκάπτει*) all things, even the deep things of God, (*καὶ τὰ κρυφὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ*.)" Such expressions as *these*, prove the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit: They prove the *former*, for he is here represented as *revealing* the counsels of God, which is the act of an intelligent agent, and as *searching* the depths of the divine operations. Personality is still more expressly ascribed to the Spirit by our Saviour, in addressing his disciples, as in John xvi. 13. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he *shall not speak of himself*, but whatsoever he shall *hear*, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come:" here he is represented, as hearing, as speaking, as foretelling future events, as guiding the apostles into all truth, and yet not speaking *of himself*. But the passage before us proves also his essential *deity*: to *search*, in scripture language, does not imply a superficial or imperfect view of a subject, but a thorough knowledge of it. Thus, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. it is said, "the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts," where the two expressions obviously explain each other; so Jer. xvii. 10. "I the Lord search the hearts, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Again, Zeph. i. 12. Jehovah threatens to "search Jerusalem as with candles." Now, who could fathom all the hidden abysses of the divine counsels, or comprehend the whole bearings of the vast scheme of providence and redemption, but an *infinite mind*? Indeed omniscience is ascribed to the Spirit, by the holy psalmist, when he says, "whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (cxxxix. 7.) And as the divine Spirit is thus possessed of infinite intelligence, so it is impossible for him to *deceive*—for he is "the Spirit of truth;" yea, "truth itself." (1 John v. 6.)

The intimate knowledge of the divine counsels possessed by the Holy Spirit, might be illustrated by a reference to the entire *consciousness* which we have of all that passes within our own minds. 11. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? so also the things of God, no one

(*ενδεις*) knoweth, except the Spirit of God." These words do not necessarily imply that the relation between the soul and spirit in man, is of the same nature as that subsisting between the Father and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead; for we cannot comprehend the mode of subsistence and operation between these divine persons. All that is meant is, that the knowledge which the Spirit of God has of the divine counsels, is as *intimate* as the consciousness which our spirit has of the affections and purposes that are formed within. The evidence of consciousness is the most certain of all kinds of knowledge. No outward testimony can possibly overthrow it. The most humble individual has a clearer conception of his own thoughts, than the most acute and attentive observer can obtain; so no created being can penetrate the clouds that surround the Eternal Throne, and comprehend the immensity of the divine operations. This is the prerogative of that glorious Spirit who first moved on the face of the deep, and formed the shapeless mass into that beautiful order which had been conceived in the mind of God.

REFLECTIONS.

1. This passage affords clear proof of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. He who was crucified is the Lord of glory; and he who inspired the apostles, searcheth the deep things of God. The connection between the body and the spirit is to us inexplicable; how then shall we comprehend the relation subsisting among the divine persons in the holy Trinity?

2. What reason have we to bless God, that he has been pleased to reveal his own eternal counsels respecting the salvation of men! Had he not done so, they must have remained a hidden mystery, which the heart of man could never have conceived. Let us take heed to the *prophetic word*, as to a light shining in a dark place, knowing that the prophecy came not of old by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. How confidently may we rely on the teaching of the Spirit; and how earnestly should we implore his enlightening, sanctifying, and consolatory influences!

On the subject of the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, the reader may consult with advantage an excellent treatise by the late Mr John Hurriion of London; also Dr Owen's larger work on the Spirit.

Nor was this supernatural suggestion limited to *these* occasions; but in their ordinary teaching, they were under an inspiration of so plenary a nature, that the very expressions they used might be said to be *supplied* by the Spirit of God. It has been well observed, that we cannot *think* without the medium of language; so that the very admission that the *thoughts* they uttered were inspired, implies the suggestion of suitable *words*, although each individual might have a peculiar style of his own.—This apostolic mode of teaching furnishes an important lesson. Almost all the errors and disputes that have arisen in the church, may be traced to the practice of explaining the doctrines of the Gospel in *words of human invention*, different from those used by the Holy Spirit. As long as the Scriptures were acknowledged as the only infallible standard of religious truth, the followers of Christ lived in comparative harmony, and the purity of the church was in some measure preserved: But when they began, with unhallowed freedom, to *improve* on the oracles of God, by explaining divine mysteries in technical phrases of their own composition, then heresies and strife, divisions and persecutions, became frequent, and produced the most deplorable consequences. Certainly no words can be better fitted to express the mind of the Spirit, than those of his own selection. Accordingly, we find the apostles constantly illustrating and confirming their own sentiments by a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures. Agreeably to this view, the last clause of this verse is rendered by some, “explaining spiritual things in spiritual words.” (See *Doddridge and Macknight*.)

It is also true, according to the received translation, which Parkhurst thinks the most *natural*, that they *compared spiritual things with spiritual*. They shewed the correspondence between the prophecies of the Old Testament and their accomplishment—between the types of the Levitical dispensation, and their fulfilment in the mediatorial undertaking of Jesus Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews supplies an illustrious example of this mode of teaching. They also pointed out the adaptation of the scheme of mercy to the spiritual condition of man, and the relation in which he stands to God. Thus Scripture is its own interpreter. The more we compare one part of it with another, and consider at what various times, and by how many persons, its different parts were communicated, we shall be the more

struck with the harmony and connection of its doctrines, and see increasing evidence of its being the work of that Divine Spirit, who searcheth all things, even the deep counsels of God.

Such being the divine authority of the religion of Christ, it is natural to enquire, Why was the apostolic testimony rejected by any? The answer is,—not from want of evidence, but from a *previous indisposition of mind* to receive it. 14. "But the natural man (*ψυχικός*) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot (*οὐ δύναται*) know them, because they are spiritually (*πνευματικῶς*) discerned." It has been disputed, what class of persons the Apostle describes under the character of the *natural man*. Some translate the word *ψυχικός*, the *animal man*; so it is rendered by Doddridge and Macknight, the latter of whom thus paraphrases the verse; "Now an animal man, who judges of things by his senses and passions and natural reason, believeth not the matters revealed by the Spirit of God; for they appear foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually examined; examined by the light which revelation, and not reason, affords." "Of this character," he adds in the notes, "were the heathen philosophers, to whom the doctrines of the Gospel were foolishness; also the Jewish scribes, and those false teachers whom Jude calls *sensual*, or animal men, not having the Spirit." It is admitted on all hands, that the expression *includes* those who, by the indulgence of their sensual appetites, lose all relish for the examination of spiritual things; thus, in Jude 19. the word is rendered *sensual*. But it has unquestionably a much wider signification in Scripture, and in the passage just quoted is explained to mean, "those who have not the Spirit;" in a word, all unregenerate persons. The animal or natural man is opposed, not to the *intellectual*, or the merely rational man, but to the *spiritual*. But the Apostle declares, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." It is evident that the pride of human reasoning and of self-righteousness, is as much opposed to the humbling doctrines of the Gospel, as are the inclinations of animal nature. Indeed, a great part of the persecution, ridicule, and invective, which have assailed Christianity, has originated with persons of the *former* description. According to the explanation given in the paraphrase above quoted, the Gospel appears foolishness only to those who judge of it by the light of

reason, without regard to revelation, or who make their senses and passions the rule of their conduct. But the learned commentator does not reflect, that there are many who *profess* the utmost reverence for the divine authority of the word of God, and who are distinguished for the external propriety of their morals, to whom the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel appear foolishness, no less than to the proud infidel, or the profligate sensualist. Take, for example, the doctrine of justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, the doctrine of the new birth by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of a life of faith in the Son of God, or the internal warfare between the flesh and spirit. They are ready, with Nicodemus, to ask, "how can these things be?" or, with the Jews, "doth he not speak parables?" "this is an hard saying, who can hear it?" There are also many who *theoretically* hold these doctrines, but are entire strangers to their spiritual *efficacy*; they do not know them, so as cordially to *approve* of them; as the word *know* often signifies. This is not owing to any thing unintelligible in the doctrines of Christianity, or in the language in which they are revealed, but it is owing to the *medium* through which they are viewed. The minds of all natural men are preoccupied with the pleasures and pursuits of the world; they are not convinced of their danger as *sinners*; and therefore they use no means for obtaining deliverance. They are under the influence of that wicked one "who blinds the minds of them that believe not." If the expression, "they are spiritually discerned," merely signifies that the things of the Spirit are examined by the light which revelation affords, then it would follow that all who examine them *by that light* would perceive their truth and excellence; but this we see is far from being the case; and therefore it must refer to a special communication of divine influence, *distinct* from the written word, by which the mind is enlightened to behold the glory, worth, and suitableness of spiritual things. The Spirit makes no new revelation to the mind, but he removes the veil of prejudice, unbelief, and self-righteousness, so that the discoveries of divine truth, appear in a new and interesting light, and are received by the spiritual man as worthy of all acceptance. An entire change is thus produced on all the powers of the mind, which is the subject of consciousness, and of which the christian can no more doubt, than that light and heat are com-

municated by the natural sun. Possessing this spiritual discernment, the meanest christian possesses more experimental knowledge of the truth and excellence of the gospel, than the most profound scholar, who is *destitute of the Spirit*: But still, it is by means of the written word that the Spirit produces conviction; and therefore it must be studied with earnest prayer for divine illumination. Those who do not apply their heart to understand this word, shall therefore be justly condemned for their *unbelief*. Some have said that the most *diligent efforts* on the part of the natural man, will not produce a spiritual discernment of heavenly truth. But can we suppose a natural man to be *desirous* of spiritual knowledge? By the supposition of his being such, the things of the Spirit are foolishness to him. Wherever there is a *desire* after the truth, it has been produced by the Holy Spirit, and shall certainly be fulfilled.

While the things of God are hid from the unregenerate, "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, but he himself is judged (*αναξιμαται*) by no man." 15. He *discerns* the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ—the adaptation of the Gospel to his condition, as a fallen and guilty creature—the vanity of all attempts to work out a righteousness of his own—the unsatisfying nature of earthly objects, and the certainty and worth of those things which are unseen and eternal. At the same time, the world cannot *judge* of the nature of those principles and motives by which he regulates his conduct; they cannot enter into his feelings, or participate in his spiritual joys and sorrows; nor can they *condemn* him in their own consciences, though they may affect to censure his conduct; by *well-doing*, he puts to silence the ignorant cavils of foolish men. In a sense peculiar to *themselves*, the apostles had a clear discernment of the will of God, and could not submit to be examined by any human authority. To *them* might be applied the language of the prophet, Isaiah xl. 13. where Jehovah asserts his omniscience and divine sovereignty, "For who hath known the mind (*νοος*) of the Lord, who shall, or, that he may, instruct him? (*ὅς συμβούσει αὐτῷ*)" 16. Some think the word *αὐτος*, *him*, refers to the *spiritual man*, as if the Apostle had asked what natural man has such a knowledge of the divine will, that he shall be able to refute the principles or doctrines of the spiritual man? But it is evident that in the language of the prophet, the Spirit of the Lord is the an-

tecedent to this relative, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him?" The meaning of the Apostle seems therefore to be, "Who can fathom the depths of the divine counsels, or improve on the plans of heavenly wisdom, or inform the omniscient *Spirit* of what he did not know before?" Certainly none would be so presumptuous and vain; well then, he adds, "but we have the mind of Christ." The expression is elliptical, and it is left to the reader to draw the obvious conclusion. "As Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in counsel and operation; and as we understand the mind of Christ, no one surely will presume to arraign our authority, or to reject our instructions." This would be equally presumptuous, as to think of instructing or reproving the omniscient Jehovah. In a spiritual sense, all christians have a measure of the same mind that was in Christ, by a resemblance to him in the moral perfections of his character, Phil. ii. 5. but the other is the obvious meaning of the passage.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The Apostle evidently lays claim to divine inspiration. He asserts that he had received the Spirit of God, that he spoke in words taught by him, that he had a spiritual discernment of all things; that he had, in fact, the mind of Christ. If such expressions do not imply a consciousness of speaking by inspiration, no language could prove this doctrine.

2. How important a duty is it to examine the Scriptures, to see whether these things are so! Are the things of God esteemed foolishness by us? How evident then the conclusion, that we are destitute of the Spirit of Christ. Without *this*, how incompetent are we to judge of spiritual persons or things!

CHAPTER THIRD.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—8.

PAUL'S REASONS FOR ADDRESSING THE CORINTHIANS AS BABES IN CHRIST.

IT would appear that the factious teachers in the church at Corinth had endeavoured to bring the apostolic character of Paul into suspicion, by insinuating that he had not *fully instructed* the members in the doctrines of Christianity, while, at the same time, they pretended to lead them into more deep and comprehensive views of divine truth. They complained that the Apostle had treated the Corinthians like *children*, feeding them with *milk*, whilst *they* affected to consider them as full grown men, who were capable of digesting *strong meat*. This flattered the vanity of the Greek converts, who were naturally fond of speculation, and were still attached to their former mode of philosophising on divine things, and were losing sight of the great design of the Gospel, to promote humility of mind and purity of heart. The unadorned preaching of the Apostle, contrasted with the rhetorical manner of their new teachers, seemed to confirm the suspicion that had been excited in their minds respecting him; and, in this chapter he explains his reasons for mainly insisting on the first rudiments of Christianity during his abode in Corinth.—1. “And I, brethren, could not (*οὐκ ἔδυνάμην* was unable to) speak to you as to spiritual persons (*πνευματικοί*), but as to carnal (*σαρκινούς*), as to babes in Christ.” It was not from any *incapacity* on his part to instruct them in the more sublime discoveries of revelation, that he had been led to adopt this method; for he had proved in the preceding chapter, that he, in common with the other apostles, had the mind of Christ, and was under the guidance of the Holy

Spirit ; but he had seen so much imperfection among them, that he could not, consistently with truth, congratulate them on their advancement in spiritual knowledge, or suffer them to remain in ignorance respecting their real character. Notwithstanding, therefore, of the variety of their spiritual gifts, and the prosperity of their outward condition, he was under the necessity of considering them as at the very threshold of the christian life. They no doubt possessed a considerable share of knowledge ; but so long as it failed to produce a corresponding change on their character, it was vain for him to advance to the more sublime doctrines of Christ. This would have been to flatter and deceive their souls. It was impossible for him to speak to them as to spiritual men. He had before said, that he who is spiritual judgeth or discerneth *all things*. It was evident, however, that they had but a very partial discernment of *some* parts of divine truth. They were elated with their spiritual gifts and religious privileges : they were too anxious to avoid the offence of the cross, and to conform to the maxims and the manners of the world ; and if they did not wholly resemble carnal or unregenerate persons, they could only be considered as *babes in Christ*. This was a keen reproof to the Corinthians, who piqued themselves on their superior knowledge and experience. The word (*σαρκινος*) *carnal* or *fleshly*, is sometimes applied to the unregenerate, as in Rom. viii. 8., where it is said, " they that are in the flesh (*οι εν σαρκι*) cannot please God." At other times, it refers to believers, as still exposed to the remaining corruption of their nature. Thus the Apostle, speaking of the inward struggle he had to maintain against sinful desires, says, *I am carnal* (*σαρκινος*). Indeed the word *σαρξ* *flesh*, is employed to signify all the affections and passions that are natural to man, whether mental or bodily ; thus among the works of *the flesh* are enumerated, not only adultery, fornication, and lasciviousness, but variance, emulations, wrath, strife, and envyings. (Gal. v. 19—21.) It is in this *last sense* it is used here. The Apostle had formerly expressed his confidence in the religious character of the Corinthians ; and here, though he could not consider them as advanced christians, he still viewed them as in Christ, though in a state of childhood. In reproving the Galatians for their erroneous opinions, he calls them his little children, chap. iv. 19. And in blaming the believing Hebrews for their limited conceptions of the Gospel, he tells them, that they

were "become such as had need of milk, and not of strong meat; for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." (Heb. v. 12, 13.) So in this place, he admits that he had "fed them with milk, (*γαλα ιποσιτω*, I have given you milk to drink), and not with meat (*ερωμα*), for ye were not then (*ουπω*) able (to receive or digest it,) and neither yet are ye now able." I have already noticed, under chap. ii. 6. that by *milk* the Apostle refers to the elementary principles of Christianity, such as repentance, faith and love; and by *strong meat*, to the more abstruse or spiritual doctrines of revelation. Had he brought forward the *latter*, while they were so deficient in the exercise of the *former*, he would have acted as injudiciously as a mother who should load the weak stomach of an infant with the strong nourishment appropriated to those of mature age. Their spiritual growth, instead of being promoted by this mode of treatment, would have been materially injured. The Apostle Peter employs the same figure in a favourable sense, to signify the earnest desire which believers should have to increase in the knowledge of divine truth. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Epist. ii. 2. John describes the different classes of christians under the names of *little children*, *young men*, and *fathers*, 1 Epis. ii. 13. The Corinthians could only be ranked under the first denomination, when Paul left them; and he was sorry to find, from the accounts he had heard of their present state, that he could not address them *as yet* under any other character. He did not doubt the *reality* of their conversion, but he was grieved with the improper spirit of emulation and strife which they now exhibited. He therefore repeats his first assertion, 3. "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying (*ζηλος*, vicious emulation,) and strife (*ερις*), and divisions (*διχοστασιαι*), are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner (*κατα*) of men?" From this it is evident, that not merely the *sensual* are to be considered as carnal, but those whose conduct is inconsistent with the holy principles which they profess to believe—the contentious, the worldly-minded, the self-confident; all indeed who prefer the gratification of their own pleasure to the glory of God, and the spiritual welfare of their brethren. If this be the case, even with respect to professing christians, much more is it with those who are ignorant of the Gospel, or who are strangers to any higher attainments than those of *nature*. The Apostle does not accuse the Corinthians of any gross *immorality*, but of undue attachment

to their favourite teachers, to the disparagement of others. He does not say that they *despised* the ministers of Christ, but they preferred one before another; they had not become lukewarm in their profession, but they were allowing their zeal to spend itself on unprofitable controversies; they had not withdrawn from the fellowship of their brethren, but, while they continued in the same communion, they were converting the church into an arena of strife. While these abuses prevailed, could they be *known* or *acknowledged* as the disciples of the meek and lowly Saviour, the badge of whose followers is peace and love? Did they not much more resemble the men of the world, who ranged themselves under various leaders, and contended with pertinacious zeal for the honour of their favourite philosophers and orators, or who strive with each other for riches, honour, and fame? From this expression, it is evident that the course of life which the christian must pursue, is very different from that of the generality of men.

In alluding to the factions in the Corinthian church, the Apostle studiously avoided mentioning the names of the popular leaders, but with great delicacy employs his own name, and that of Apollos, while exposing the impropriety of their party differences: 4. "While one saith I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not *carnal*?" Were they not losing sight of the great end of the christian ministry, and depriving themselves of the benefit of those gifts which they professed to value so highly? Even supposing their favourite teachers had the knowledge of *Paul*, or the eloquence of *Apollos*, was that a reason for their setting one in opposition to another, or for *glorying* in those who had been employed merely as the instruments of their conversion?—5. "Who then is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministers (*διακονοι*) through whom (*δι' ὧν*) ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every one?" Allowing that the contending parties really assumed these excellent names, Paul could assure them that *he* had no desire for such distinctions. If they had derived any advantage from his ministry, or that of his esteemed brother, it was not owing to any ability or virtue of theirs; for their *success* and their *endowments* were equally the gifts of sovereign grace; and none was more sensible than he, that no labours of *his* could convert a sinner from the error of his way, without the special blessing of God. The words, "as the Lord gave to each," may refer either to the *preach-*

ers, or to *them who believed*—The *former* derived all their gifts and usefulness from the great Head of the Church; who gave them that measure of success which he saw meet; and the *latter* were brought to receive the word of life, as the Lord was pleased to open their heart, and to convince them of the truth and excellence of the Gospel. Both explanations resolve the conversion of souls into the operation of sovereign grace. The former seems the more natural. (Acts xviii. 27.)

To give them a more full view of the nature of the christian ministry, he compares himself and Apollos, first to labourers in the same vineyard, and then to fellow-workmen in the same building. "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God made it to grow (*αὐξάνει*)." In the order of time, the ministry of Paul preceded that of Apollos:—he had enclosed the field, broken up the fallow ground, sown the good seed of the word in the hearts of the people, and *planted* those who believed, as trees of righteousness, in the garden of the Lord. Apollos had *watered* the plants by promoting their spiritual improvement, and "helping those much who had believed through grace." But the exertions of both would have been fruitless, had not God *caused the plants to grow*. As well might the husbandman assert, that his planting and watering are sufficient to account for the growth of a tree, without the influence of the sun and rain. It is, no doubt, necessary that he should both prepare the ground, and sow the seed; and so must the christian teacher commit the precious seed of the Gospel to the hearts of his hearers, and water it with his prayers and tears, if he would return with joy, "bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. cxxvi. 6. Neither in providence nor in grace is the end to be expected without the means.

As in the operations of husbandry, the labours of the most skilful agriculturist would be utterly useless, without the influence of the natural sun; so in the economy of grace, the most powerful and eloquent preaching will never *originate* the principle of spiritual life, without the effectual energy of the Holy Spirit: not till the *Spirit be poured from on high*, will the wilderness of the human heart become a fruitful field. (Isa. xxxii. 15.) So far from desiring to be considered as the head of a party, or as the efficient cause of the conversion of men, the Apostle made *no account* of his labours in the church of God: 7. "Wherefore (*οὐθέν*) neither is he that planteth any thing; neither he that watereth;

but God who giveth the increase." The conduct of the Corinthians, in preferring one teacher to another, was also very absurd; as if they had opposite ends in view, or preached different gospels—For "he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one." Their different operations do not *interfere*; both conduce to the desired result; and *neither* can be dispensed with. So all the faithful ministers of Christ, whatever may be their sphere of action, or department of labour, are *one in interest and affection*,—they serve the same Master, they preach the same Gospel, and they support the same cause. There should be no jealousy or opposition among them; by whatever names they are called, they should rejoice in each other's success, and pray for a blessing on their united exertions. If they are found *faithful*, they shall receive an abundant recompence; not according to the estimation in which they have been held by men, but in proportion to their respective diligence and fidelity; 8. "Every one shall receive his proper reward (*ιδιον μισθον*) according to his own labour." "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) He that has received *ten talents* and diligently improved them, shall receive a proportionable reward; but even he that has improved but *one*, shall not be disappointed or despised: His Lord shall say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 23.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is necessary for the christian preacher to adapt his instructions to the character and capacity of his hearers. Babes must not be fed with strong meat. To address those who are under the influence of a carnal or contentious spirit, in the same language that is proper for the stedfast and consistent *believer*, is to do them a serious injury on the most important of all subjects. It prevents them from discovering their real character. The privileges and promises peculiar to the people of God, must not be exhibited as the *common property* of all who profess the christian faith. The skilful workman will rightly divide the word, so as to give every man a portion of meat in due season: He will warn the unruly, he will comfort the feeble-mind-

ed, he will alarm the self-secure, and thus keep himself free from the blood of all men. Till the first principles of the religion of Christ be practically called into exercise, he must continue to feed his people with *milk*, even should they accuse him of deficiency in knowledge. Should he omit *these*, and occupy their attention with the higher departments of revealed truth, he might gratify their curiosity, or feed their natural vanity, but he would endanger the salvation of their souls. It is possible for an individual to profess the purest creed, to be connected with the most scriptural church, and to be possessed of the most eminent gifts, who is nothing more than a *carnal* professor, or at best, but a *babe in Christ*: there may be nothing vicious in his external conduct, but he may stir up contentions by his over-bearing and refractory temper; or undervalue the gifts of the humble servant of Christ, or be lamentably deficient in the exercise of that charity which thinketh no evil. Some have indulged in curious speculations, where the Scripture is nearly silent; and this they consider as feeding their hearers with strong meat. But this is to substitute the offspring of their own fancy, for the wholesome words of sound doctrine.

2. Let us never forget that the most eminent preacher owes all his qualifications and all his success to the grace of God. It is our part to *plant* and *water*, but it is *His* prerogative to make it grow.

3. The bond of union in a church should be the mutual love of the members for the truth's sake, not the personal qualifications of the pastor.

4. Though the reward of the righteous is entirely of grace, yet it shall be proportioned to the diligence, fidelity, and zeal with which they have acted in the service of Christ.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 9—15.

IN WHAT MANNER THE TEMPLE OF GOD SHOULD BE BUILT.

THE Apostle had compared the church at Corinth to an *enclosed field*, where Apollos and himself had been employed in planting

and rearing those, who, by divine grace, had received the good seed of the word into their hearts. They were not therefore to be considered as *lords* over God's heritage, but as *joint workers* employed by him. 9. "For we are fellow labourers of God, (*Θεοῦ συνεργοί*) ye are God's husbandry, or rather *cultivated ground*, (*γεωργίαι*)." The common expression, "workers together with God," seems to place the servant on a level with the master. The Lord might indeed be said to work *with them*, by his Spirit, "confirming his word with signs following," (as in Mark xvi. 20.) and rendering it effectual to the conversion of souls. Still they were merely instruments in his hand, who owed all their fitness and their success to him. He was the sovereign proprietor of the vineyard, by whom they had been employed as *workmen*, and to whom they must give an account. Nor can they lay claim to that honour which is due to him alone. The work of the ministry is here represented as a laborious undertaking, demanding the utmost diligence and attention. The Old Testament church is compared to a vineyard by the prophet Isaiah, (in chap. v. 1—7.) carefully enclosed and planted with the choicest vine. The same figure is employed by our Saviour, Matt. xxi. 33—40. where the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, are spoken of. So in the xcii. psalm, verse 13., the righteous are said to be *planted in the house of the Lord*.

The Apostle next compares the church to a *building*, where different workmen are employed in selecting, polishing, and cementing the stones of the spiritual temple: "Ye are the building of God." This figure is frequently made use of in Scripture. It was familiar to the *Jews*, who were taught to consider their beautiful temple as a type of the church; and it was well adapted to the national taste of the Greeks, who were greatly celebrated for their skill in architecture. 10. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Paul had been appointed by divine grace as a *skilful architect* (*σοφὸς ἀρχιτεκτων*) or master builder, to *lay the foundation* of the church at Corinth. It belonged to the apostles to delineate the design, and to superintend the building of the churches; and, in doing this, they acted *according to the measure of the grace of God which was given to them*. In their writings, they still describe the plan, and point out the proper

materials for the building. He had been since called away to labour in other places, and had left the work to be carried on by others, who are considered as ordinary workmen. *Another was building* on the foundation which he had laid. But it behoved "every man to look well in what manner he builded." In these words, he evidently refers to the factious teachers. With regard to the proper *foundation* of the church, there could be no room for any difference of opinion. *That* had been already laid, and no human ingenuity could discover any other, on which it was either safe or lawful to build; "for other foundation no one can place (*θεῖναι*) except that which is laid, which is Jesus the Christ, (*Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός*)." 11. This foundation had been laid in the counsels of eternity, (1 Pet. i. 20.) On *this* the whole of the Levitical dispensation had been erected.—It was pointed out in the prophetic writings, as in Isaiah xxviii. 16. "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not be ashamed or make haste." It was *rejected* by the foolish builders of the Jewish church, but was chosen of God and precious; who, by accepting the one offering of his beloved Son, and exalting him to his own right hand, constituted him the foundation and corner-stone of the whole system of grace, (Psalm cxviii. 22.) The doctrines relating to the person, character, work, and offices of the Lord Jesus, are the only solid *basis* of hope to a guilty sinner. On this Rock the church is built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. xvi. 18.)

Very different *materials*, however, might be built on this foundation. Even where no fundamental *error* is embraced, the superstructure may be deformed and debased by the admixture of wood, hay, stubble, with the gold, silver, and precious stones of the sacred edifice. The verses which follow are not unattended with difficulty; and it may be proper to consider the views which have been taken of them by different writers: 12—15. "Now, if any man build on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the work of each shall be made manifest, (*φανερὸν γίνησεται*) for the day shall declare, or shew it, (*δηλώσει*), because it is revealed, or discovered by fire (*ἡ πυρὶ ἀποκαλύπτῆται*), and the fire shall prove (*δοκιμάσει*) the work of every man of what sort it is (*ὅποιοι εἰσὶν*). If the work of any one remains (*μένει*) which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If the work of any shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved,

yet so as through fire (*δια πυρός*).“ The church is here compared to a great structure, which ought to be composed of the most costly and durable materials. Some of the workmen, however, are supposed to act *unfaithfully*, and in a surreptitious manner to substitute the most base and perishable substances in executing their part of the work. The fraud is not detected at first, on account of their artful contrivances; but when the scaffolding is removed, and the overseer or proprietor comes to inspect the building, then the insufficient and worthless parts are brought to light. In settling accounts with the labourers, those who have fulfilled the conditions of the contract, receive their hire or reward: but those who have fraudulently patched their work with base rubbish, are justly deprived of all compensation, as having failed to perform their engagement. The building is subjected to a rigorous scrutiny, which the Apostle, by a *variation* of metaphor, compares to the trial of the precious metals by the furnace. A mean building composed of planks of wood, and thatched with straw, is ill adapted to withstand the force of tempests, or the ravages of fire.

The church of Rome, on this passage, attempts to build the doctrine of purgatory. The gold, silver, and precious stones, according to this view, “refer to the more perfect preaching and practice of the Gospel: The wood, hay, stubble, to such preaching as that of the factious teachers, and to such practice as is mixed with much imperfection and many lesser sins: The day of the Lord, and the fiery trial, is the particular judgment which takes place immediately after death: Those whose works cannot abide the fire, shall suffer loss; but they themselves, having lived and died in the faith, and in the state of grace, though with much imperfection, shall be *saved*, yet so as by fire, being liable to this punishment, by reason of the wood, hay, and stubble, which was mixed with their building.” Thus far the Roman Catholic annotators.—But such a momentous doctrine as this ought not to rest on a figurative passage of Scripture. The doctrine of purgatory was unknown to the early ages of the church, and was evidently borrowed from the Grecian philosophy. Thus Virgil represents Anchises as describing the Platonic system to his son Eneas, particularly as it respects the state of the dead:

Quin et supremo quum lumine vita reliquit,
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus omnes

Corporeæ excedunt pestes, penitusque necesse est
 Multa diu concreta molis inolescere miris, &c. ENÆID, b. 6. l. 736.

"Nor death itself can wholly wash their stains,
 But long contracted filth e'en in the soul remains :
 The relics of invet'rate vice they wear,
 And spots of sin obscene in every face appear.
 For this are various penances enjoined ;
 And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
 Some plunged in waters, others *purged in fires*,
 Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires."—DRYDEN.

The Old Testament writers certainly knew of no such doctrine, when they assert that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave," (Eccles. ix. 10.), and that "as the tree falls, there it shall lie." Our Saviour gave no countenance to it, when he said to one who had been guilty of more than *venial sins*, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," (Luke xxiii. 43.) The Apostle had no dread of such punishment, when he declared, that to be "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." (2 Epis. v. 6.) Such a doctrine dishonours the perfect sacrifice of Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. It keeps the weak christian in bondage, through fear of death, from which Christ came to deliver us. It emboldens men to continue in sin, with the prospect of final absolution, and it has afforded a pretence to an avaricious priesthood to drain the treasures of the multitude. It is not said that the *person saved* shall be tried with fire, but his *work*; while he himself shall escape with extreme difficulty, *as* one who flees from a burning house. Thus it is said of the ancient Israelites, Ps. lxi. 12. "We went through fire and through water," we passed through great dangers. So in Zech. iii. 2., Joshua the high priest is compared to a "brand plucked out of the fire," preserved with difficulty from the dangers of the captivity. And Jude exhorts (ver. 23.) to "save some with fear, plucking them out of the fire," warning them, in this life, with great earnestness, to flee from the wrath to come. Besides, as shall be afterwards shewn, the Apostle is speaking not of *believers* in general, but of *christian teachers*.

Others interpret the *wood, hay, and stubble*, as referring to religious ceremonies of human invention. Thus the phrase is applied by many protestant writers to those pious individuals, such as

Pascal and Fenelon, who, although they built on the *true foundation*, so far as respects the way of acceptance with God, continued to uphold and practice the superstitions of the Romish church. These individuals shall be *saved*, notwithstanding the obscurity of their views, and their adherence to unscriptural traditions. Nearly allied to this, is the opinion, that the Apostle refers to those who have embraced *erroneous doctrines*, though they may be considered as holding the *essentials* of Christianity; but it has been observed that the system of *doctrine* is no where compared to a building, nor can doctrines be said, with propriety, to be tried with fire. It would seem that the Apostle had already spoken of *these* as constituting the *foundation* of the church: the supporters of false doctrine, are in fact building on *another foundation*; and conscientious differences of opinion, on points of doubtful disputation, cannot be said to endanger the salvation of the soul.

It only remains, therefore, to notice the opinion which appears to be best founded,—that the Apostle is speaking, not of religious ceremonies, or opinions, but of *different classes of individuals* professing the Christian faith. According to this view, he is here pointing out the proper qualifications for *church fellowship*. Those who have received the truth in the love of it, and maintain a deportment worthy of the Gospel, are precious in the sight of the Lord, as *gold, silver, and precious stones*. Those, on the other hand, who have nothing more than a form of godliness, are like *wood, hay, and stubble*, vile and worthless. Both of these classes may claim a place in the house of God, but the Christian pastor must take care *with what sort of materials he rears the spiritual temple*. The enlightened and consistent disciple he is bound to admit to the communion of saints; but the nominal and worldly professor he must of necessity *reject*. Such persons are destitute of the power of godliness, and are wholly unprepared for the *trials* of the christian life. The *day of trial* may allude to a season of persecution, which Peter calls a fiery trial, (1 Epis. iv. 12.) This purifies the faith of true believers, as gold when tried in the fire. It *proves* the strength of their love, and the excellence of their principles; and while they stand fast in the Lord, their faithful pastors rejoice that they have not run in vain, or laboured in vain. Their characters shall be further *proved* in the day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, when he shall sever the wicked from amidst the just, and shall try the secrets

of all hearts. Then the righteous shall come forth *as gold*, and shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They shall be presented to the Judge of all by their beloved teachers, as their hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing, who shall be graciously rewarded by the Chief Shepherd with a crown of glory that fadeth not away. On the other hand, if the christian minister admits into the church, those who appear by their conduct to be *destitute* of the power of godliness; in the time of temptation, they are discouraged and fall away; and in the great day of the Lord, they shall be as *stubble*: the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Mal. iv. 1.) Thus the unfaithful *workmen* will lose the fruit of their labour. They may indeed themselves adhere to the truth of the Gospel, and therefore shall not finally be cast away. But how great a loss will they sustain! What reward can they expect, as *labourers* in the work of the ministry? They shall resemble persons who make their escape from a burning house, who are glad to secure their lives, and who witness the destruction of all their property.

According to *this view*, the whole passage admits of an easy interpretation, and conveys an important lesson. On any other hypothesis, it is perplexed with difficulties. It is also most agreeable to the *context*. The Apostle had expressly said of the Corinthian church, "*ye are God's building*;" and in the verse immediately following those under consideration, he asks, "know ye not that *ye are the temple of God*?" and then he shews the danger of *defiling* that temple. Now the factious teachers were not merely propagating erroneous *doctrines*, but they were *corrupting the purity* of the church, by holding fellowship with improper characters, as he afterwards notices, chap. v. and xv. It is also evident, as already observed, that he refers not to private christians, but to christian *ministers*, as fellow-workers of God, employed to build or edify the church.

This interpretation is also supported by the *general language* of Scripture. How often is the church compared to a building! In writing to the Ephesians, the Apostle observes, "*ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*" (chap. ii. 20, 21.) In the same manner, in addressing the believ-

ing *Hebrews*, he observes of the faithful in Christ, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," (chap. iii. 6.) The like figure is employed Rev. iii. 12. But the language of the apostle Peter is still more express; addressing the believing strangers, he says, "*ye also as lively stones* are built up a spiritual house;" where the *λίθοι τιμίαι* and the *λίθοι ζῶντες* evidently correspond to each other. It is also worthy of notice, that the saints are compared to *precious stones* by Isaiah, (chap. liv. 12.) where, speaking of the prosperity of the church, he says, "I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones;" and then dropping the figure, he explains his meaning, by adding, "and all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children." The prophet Malachi further compares the righteous to *jewels*; "they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels;" and the wicked to "*stubble*;" where the LXX employ the very same word which is used by the Apostle (*καλαμὴ*), Mal. iii. 17.; iv. 1. The prophet Ezekiel complains (chap. xlv. 7.) that the Old Testament priests brought into the sanctuary "strangers, uncircumcised in heart and in flesh, to be in the sanctuary to pollute it;" and alluding to the time of reformation, Jehovah says, "they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean," (chap. xxii. 26.; xlv. 23.); and surely less is not to be expected from the builders of the *christian church*. We are charged, by the highest authority, to *take heed how we build*; and though we cannot pretend to judge the *heart*, we are required to know the tree by its fruits, and have a right to require a practical conformity to the written laws of God. Thus will the church on earth be brought to resemble the church above; and we shall not be accountable for occasional disappointments. The glory of God, the honour of the Gospel, a regard to the prosperity and peace of the church, to our own safety, and to the spiritual welfare of our fellow men, all concur in shewing the vast importance of preserving purity of communion in christian churches.

That the view now given is correct, will further appear, if we consider the language of the apostles with reference to their *labours in the ministry*. They invariably speak of the proportion which their reward shall bear, to the number of those who have been

converted by their instrumentality. This the Apostle Paul considered "the fruit or reward of his labour," while he lived in the flesh. (Philip. i. 22.) Writing to the Thessalonians, he asks, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (chap. ii. 19. 1 Epis.) The language of the beloved Apostle clearly explains the allusion in the text. In his 1st Epis. chap. ii. 28. he says, "And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, *we* may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," as *those* whose work has been burnt up: And still more pointedly, 2 Epis. 8. addressing the elect lady and her children, he says, "Look to yourselves that *we* lose not those things which we have wrought, but that *we* (not you) receive a full reward."* See also Philip. ii. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

1. I trust the great importance, as well as the acknowledged difficulty of this passage, will sufficiently account for the length to which I have extended these remarks. How great the honour of christian ministers; to be fellow-labourers under God; to be employed in preparing the stones of the heavenly sanctuary, and in building the temple of the Lord! How precious the character of genuine christians! They are more valuable than gold, more costly than jewels. How great the responsibility connected with the pastoral office! A faithful discrimination between the faithful and the formal professor ought to be fearlessly exercised. In this case, how great the present comfort and the future reward!

2. Are we prepared for the fiery trial of persecution for the truth's sake? If not, how shall we stand the test of that day which shall burn as an oven?

3. How beautiful is the church of God! No structure erected

* The interpretation above given, is agreeable to the opinion of some of the most ancient fathers of the church.—Jerome, Theodoret, and Ecumenius, thought that the materials represent not *doctrines*, but the *disciples* of Christ. To their testimony may be added that of Dr McKnight, a clergyman of the national church, whose sentiments have been in a great measure embodied into this discourse. Mr Parkhurst approves of the same interpretation. (*See Gr. Lex. voc. sup.*)

by the hands of man presents such a glorious appearance ; no garden affords such delightful variety, and such exhilarating fragrance.

“Awake, O heavenly wind ! and come,
Blow on this garden of perfume ;
Spirit divine ! descend and breathe
A gracious gale on plants beneath.

Make our best spices flow abroad,
To entertain our Saviour God,
And faith, and love, and joy appear,
And every grace be active here.” WATTS.

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 16—23.

THE PURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE.

THE Apostle having compared the church to a building, which ought to be composed of the most valuable and durable materials, proceeds now to make the application of the sentiments he had advanced. 16. “Know ye not that ye are the temple (*sanctuary*) of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?” The human heart was originally consecrated as a residence for the Deity. On this altar the flame of love was kindled, and from it ascended the incense of prayer and praise. But sin has overthrown this beautiful structure—the altar is overturned—the fire is extinguished, and the voice of thanksgiving is no longer heard. This thought is elegantly expressed by Mr Howe in his *Living Temple*. Now, it is the design of the dispensation of grace to *rebuild* this temple of the Lord, to purify it from spiritual idolatry, and to render it again a suitable residence for the Divine Spirit. This is effected by his regenerating grace on the hearts of his people. Hence believers are reminded that their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. (chap. vi. 19.) And as individual christians are thus compared to temples, so the same figure is applied both to the universal church and to *particular churches* : in this last sense it is used

here. He says *temple*, not *temples*.—"Now the temple of God is holy." Under the former dispensation Jehovah manifested his presence in that bright cloud which overshadowed the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and temple. Hence every thing connected with the sanctuary was denominated *holy*. The tabernacle and all the vessels of the service were sprinkled with blood, to denote their separation from a common to a sacred use. The very garments of the High Priest were consecrated for glory and beauty. The priests were required to be solemnly set apart to the service of God, and were to keep themselves pure from moral and ceremonial pollution. The holy place was entered with incense during the offering of the daily sacrifice; and the most holy place could be entered only by the high priest once a-year, not without blood: This he offered first for his own sins, and then for the people. In short the numerous sacrifices and oblations reminded the worshippers, of the infinite purity of the Divine Majesty, and of the defiling nature of sin. They were constantly taught, that "great fear is due unto him in the meeting of his saints, and that he must be revered by all that are about him." (Ps. lxxxix. 7.)

The Jewish temple was a type of the *christian church*, "Which temple are ye." It is founded on Jesus Christ, composed of lively stones, and designed as an habitation of God through the Spirit: "This," he says, "is my rest for ever; here will I dwell for I have desired it." (Pa. cxxxii. 14.) The church is the temple of God, because *the Spirit of God dwells in it*—a clear evidence of the deity of the Holy Spirit: were he not God, his dwelling in the church, would not prove it to be the temple of God. So when Peter was reproofing Ananias for lying to the Holy Ghost, he told him that he had "not lied unto men but unto God," (Acts v. 3, 4.) The Holy Spirit has, from the beginning, been the medium of all divine communications, and the source of spiritual influence. He strove with the world before the flood, (Gen. vi. 3.) He instructed the Jewish legislator in the services of the law. He guided the church in the wilderness, (Isa. lxiii. 11.) He spoke by the mouth of the prophets, (Neh. ix. 20, 30.) He inspired the ancient worthies with strength and consolation, (Judges xiv. 19. Ps. li. 12.) He was the great subject of promise before the coming of the Messiah, (Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Joel ii. 28.) But it was reserved for the christian dispensation to make known

the office of the Spirit in all the plenitude of his gifts and graces, as the guide, comforter, and teacher of the church, John xiv. 17. On the apostles of Christ a more abundant effusion of his extraordinary gifts descended. By this means they were furnished with every necessary qualification. He directed them in choosing the sphere of their labours. He enabled them to speak with new tongues and to confirm their testimony by illustrious miracles; when they were deceived, the Holy Spirit was tempted; and when *they* were rejected, *he* was despised. Nor were his gifts communicated to the *apostles* alone. The church at large was enlightened, comforted and edified by him, Acts ix. 31. And he is still the author of hope, and love, and joy. (Rom. v. 5.; xiv. 17.; xv. 13.) By him our spiritual sacrifices are sanctified. (chap. xv. 16.) By him we are sealed unto the day of redemption. He enables us to mortify the deeds of the body. All our graces are the fruits of the Spirit. He helps our infirmities in prayer. He is the earnest of the future inheritance; and he shall at last quicken our mortal bodies to everlasting life. (Rom. viii. 11.) The operations ascribed to him in these passages, shew that divine influence was not limited to the apostolic age; and confirm the truth of the promise, "He shall abide with you for ever." Such being the office of the Holy Spirit, how reasonable is it that we should act as *one spirit with him*—how careful should we be of grieving this heavenly resident, or of quenching his gracious influences—how necessary that we should purify ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit—and with what special care should we maintain the *sanctity of the church*, where he peculiarly dwells!

Accordingly, the Apostle adds, 17. "If any one corrupt (*φθίγει*: defile or destroy) the temple of God, him will God destroy (*φθίγει*), for the temple of God is holy, which (temple) ye are." Now the temple of God may be said to be corrupted by the introduction of false doctrines, and by the adoption of superstitious and unscriptural ceremonies; but it is also corrupted when the ordinances of Christ are prostituted to secular interests; when improper persons are retained in the communion of the church; when, as Dr McKnight expresses it, christian teachers, "from worldly motives, allure bad men into the church, or continue them in it, by wilfully perverting the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel; or, when hypocrites, for worldly ends, intrude themselves among

the faithful, and put on a great shew of godliness." The temple is also defiled by means of contentions and divisions, originating in a spirit of bitterness, pride, and revenge. They who are the authors of such evils, shall be held *as polluted*, or accursed, like Achan in the camp of Israel, (Josh. vii. 25.); they interrupt the free communication of divine influence, and though they may escape the censures of *men*, they shall be made manifest in the day of the Lord, and be punished by him with everlasting *destruction*. Perhaps there may be some allusion to the miraculous judgments inflicted on disorderly persons in the primitive times—as in the instance of Ananias and Sapphira.

In the same manner, if we defile the temple of God in *our hearts*, by the indulgence of sinful thoughts, angry passions, and idolatrous attachments, the Divine Spirit will withhold his gracious influences, our graces will soon languish and wither, our souls will be deprived of all spiritual comfort, and we shall lose all evidence of our being in a state of salvation.

In advancing these sentiments, the Apostle spoke under the guidance of infallible truth, and therefore he adds, 18. "Let no man deceive himself." It is possible for one to deceive *his own heart*, as James observes when speaking of contentious persons; (chap. i. 26.) and on *no* other subject are we more apt to impose on ourselves, than in relation to our own *religious character*. The factious leaders in the church at Corinth were elated with the opinion of their superior prudence and sagacity, and supposed they could indulge in many things, as to the lawfulness of which other christians scrupled, on account of their *greater knowledge* and experience, and their possessing a more enlightened conscience. But they were under a dangerous *delusion*. They had yet to learn the first lesson of Christianity, to humble themselves as little children at the feet of Christ. "If any man among you thinks (*δοκεῖ*) to be wise in this world (*αἰῶν*, age), let him become a fool (*μωρὸς*) that he may be made wise (*γινῆται*)." It is the design of the Gospel to humble the pride of the human heart—to convince us of our natural *ignorance*, weakness, and liability to err—to shew us that we know nothing as we ought to know, and to lead us to renounce all dependence on our own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and, with the meekness and docility of children, to seek the illumination and guidance of God's Holy Spirit. *Then* we shall be made wise unto salvation; the word of

Christ shall dwell richly in us in all wisdom, and we shall count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. We may, it is true, be esteemed *fools* by the world; they will deride our principles, our spirit, and conduct, as precise, enthusiastic, and extravagant; and the signs of spiritual life will be considered as the symptoms of *mental delusion*: but such has been their treatment of the followers of Christ in every age. What an interesting sight is it, to behold men of lofty genius and various erudition, submitting to be taught the truth in Jesus, by those whose intellectual attainments may be far *inferior*, but whose mind has been imbued with spiritual knowledge and experience! Yet such is the effect of christian principle on those whom the world has reputed *wise*, when they have been made fools *for Christ's sake*: "The meek he will guide in judgment, and to them he will teach his way." (Ps. xxv. 9.)

The Apostle again repeats the assertion with which he had *set out*, (chap. i. 19, 20.) 19. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God:" this he confirms by a reference to the testimony of Scripture, as he had done before by an *appeal to historical fact*: "For it is written, He taketh (*ἀρροφύσας*, catcheth) the wise in their own craftiness." It has been observed that this is a quotation from Job v. 13., which is here recognised as an inspired production, and quoted with the usual solemnity, "It is written." He further confirms his assertion by a reference to Psalm xciv. 11. where, alluding to the impiety of the wicked, who trample on the poor and defenceless, from the expectation of eluding the knowledge of the Most High, the sacred writer proves the omniscience of God, by appealing to his creative power, and adds, "the Lord knoweth the reasonings (*διαλογισμούς*) of the wise that they are vain," 20. It is easy for the Almighty to disappoint the *devices* of his enemies; nothing can escape his notice, nothing can resist his power, nothing can frustrate his counsels: "He does according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder thereof he is able to restrain. Those very schemes which men have formed for the *ruin* of his church, prove the occasion of their own downfall. Many instances of this occur in the history of the world. Pharaoh dealt *wisely*, as he thought, with the people of Israel, to reduce

them to hopeless bondage, but God had decreed their deliverance, and all the power and subtilty of the Egyptians could not detain them. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters." (Exod. xv. 9, 10.) The Assyrian monarch impiously asked, "Who is Jehovah that he should deliver you out of my hands?" He invaded Judea with a powerful army, and already exulted in the confidence of victory. But says the Lord, "I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." (Isa. xxxvii. 28, 29.) The proud city of Babylon said, "I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children." But, says Jehovah, "these two things shall come upon thee, in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood." (chap. xlvii. 8, 9.) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." But "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision," (Ps. ii. 1, 2.) "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. For he knoweth vain men, he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?" (Job v. 13. xi. 11.)

Such being the limited nature of the powers of the human mind, such the comparative weakness of the *mighty*, and the comparative ignorance and folly of the *wise*, "Let no man glory or boast in men (*καυχασθε*)," however distinguished by talent, or elevated in rank; for man at his best state is altogether vanity. It was also quite beneath the dignity of the christian character, to manifest such undue attachment to any fellow-creature; as these Corinthian converts entertained in favour of particular *preachers*. They were forgetting the ample grant that had been made to them, as the children of God, of all things pertaining to life and godliness; "for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 21-23. Such is the charter of the christian's privileges. The

Apostle first states the grant made to believers, in *general terms*, "all things are yours." He does not of course mean that the people of God *as such*, have a preferable right to the riches and honours of this world, as some have extravagantly asserted, which would involve christians in political intrigues, and would overthrow the frame of civil society. The kingdom of Christ is *not of this world*. It was never his intention that his followers should have their portion in this life. But the meaning is, that all things are imparted to them, that are conducive to their temporal, spiritual, and eternal *welfare*. He accordingly now specifies the particulars of which this grant is composed. First, they have a common interest in the labours of all the faithful *servants of Christ*. Not only Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, as the different factions supposed, but *all* of these eminent persons were their own. They were equally the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake. They derived their authority and gifts alike from him, and these were designed, not for their personal advantage, but for the edifying of the body of Christ. They were not to confine their attention to any one place, but they were to diffuse their exertions as much as possible, "that all might learn, and all might be edified." The churches in *general* had the advantage of their preaching, their writings, their example, and their prayers. Every individual christian ought therefore to rejoice in their success, and to pray for a blessing on their common labours. The same thing may be said of ordinary pastors, *now*. Instead of entertaining fears or jealousies respecting each other, every one should strengthen his brother's hands in the work of the Lord. They have a common cause, and therefore they have a common interest, and the greater the success of each preacher, the more is the happiness of the church at large promoted. Every new convert added to the Lord, will swell the song of praise in the church triumphant, and must afford unspeakable pleasure to those who know the worth of souls, and who pray for the prosperity of Zion. The benevolence of the Gospel is of the most diffusive kind. What though the person converted be an African or a Hindoo? he is still a brother of the human family; and when he is *restored* to his Father's house, it is meet that we should make merry and be glad. Thus should the *churches* rejoice in the reputation, gifts, and usefulness, not merely of their own pastors, but of *all* the faithful ministers of Christ. (*See an ex-*

cellent *Essay on this subject in the Christian Herald for October 1824, signed Trophimus.*)

The Apostle further observes that the *world* is theirs. The christian studies the book of nature with an enlightened mind. He beholds the glory of the Creator in the magnificent structure of the universe : in the sun, moon, and stars, that roll in the vast expanse of heaven ; in the mountains, rivers, and smiling fields that variegate the surface of the earth ; in every flower that blows, in every tree that blossoms, in the innumerable tribes of animated creatures that people the earth, the sea, and the sky. He admires the divine energy by which the whole system is upheld, which

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”—POPE.

Another poet beautifully expresses the sentiment of the Apostle, “ the world is yours :”

“ His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers, his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unassuming eye,
And smiling say—my Father made them all !”—COWPER.

Thus, though the christian is forbidden to set his affections on things below, he can enjoy the blessings of Providence, with a relish unknown to the men of the world. When he contrasts the goodness of the Lord with his own unworthiness, he exclaims “ What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits ?” He can eat his bread with gladness and singleness of heart, for God has accepted him. He may be placed in circumstances of comparative want, but he never distrusts the power and faithfulness of God to feed him with convenient food. In this sense it may be said, “ the meek shall inherit the earth.” Even the *opposition* of the world serves to promote his spiritual good, to humble him, to purify and invigorate his faith. The expression may also intimate, that

the whole world shall ultimately be brought under the influence of the Gospel. Thus Abraham was constituted the heir of the world; and the prophet Daniel predicts a period when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." (Dan. vii. 27.)

Life is his;—by the belief of the Gospel, he is quickened to spiritual life; he enjoys that peace which passeth understanding, that joy which cannot be expressed. His life is devoted to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men, which is its proper business, its best enjoyment, and its great end. He is an heir of eternal life, through Jesus Christ.

Death is his. He is not exempted from the calamities incident to the present state; but even affliction is to him a blessing in disguise. He contemplates the approach of the last enemy with holy fortitude. Death is viewed by him as the gate of eternal life; he commits his soul into his Saviour's hands, and gently falls asleep in Jesus. Even his mouldering dust shall be raised to glory and honour. *Present things are his*. They are all made to work together for his good, being arranged in infinite wisdom and love. Though to the eye of *sense*, they appear dark and intricate, he looks through the cloud to *Him* who "rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm." *Things to come are his*. But here imagination drops her wing, and our brightest conceptions fall infinitely short of the reality. For "it does not yet appear what we shall be." The Apostle would therefore again repeat "all things are yours."

But he also mentions the *foundation* of these privileges; and *ye are Christ's*. The conjunction (*ἐν*) has here the force of an illative particle. The blessings enumerated, are not common to all the sons of men; for there are many who are strangers to the covenants of promise. They are the property of those who belong to Christ, as members of his mystical body and *one* with him in spirit, as given to him by the Father, purchased by his blood, and sealed with his Spirit. *And Christ is God's*—One with him in his divine nature; his beloved Son and chosen servant, in whom his soul delighteth; the first born among many brethren, who shall reign with him in glory. They are constituted heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ the Lord of all. Consequently they have a common interest in all that is *his*. "The

glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." John xvii. 22.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us rejoice that *the Lord reigneth*, and that he can turn the devices of the crafty against themselves. We need not fear that he will leave his church to the fury of her enemies. The floods of persecution may rise, and threaten to swallow her up; but He can say to these, as he does to the natural sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

2. If such be the present privileges and the future prospects of the saints, how should they rejoice amidst all the troubles of life! "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Our life is hid with Christ in God. His Father is our Father, and his God our God.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—8.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

THE preceding part of this Epistle had been chiefly occupied with arguments to prove the *vanity* of all human philosophy in matters of religion—to shew the impropriety of extolling particular teachers above others, as if they were able, by their own natural talents, to change the hearts of men—and to point out the duty of ascribing every measure of success to the influences of the Holy Spirit, and of giving the glory to God to whom it is due. At the same time, the Apostle did not mean to assert that he and his fellow-labourers did not receive their commission from God, or that either their persons or their doctrines were to be *despised*. He only wished that they should be kept in their proper place, and that a just estimate should be formed of their character and office. In the beginning of this chapter, he lays down the rules according to which Christian teachers are to be judged. 1. “Let a man so esteem us (λογίζεσθω) as the servants (υπητάς) of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God (οικονομους μυστηρίων Θεου).” They are to be considered, not indeed as lords over God’s heritage, but yet as *ministers* of Jesus Christ, sent forth by him to shew unto men the way of salvation. As *such* they had renounced many temporal advantages, and had many trials and difficulties to struggle with; and it was therefore reasonable that christians should treat them with respect, and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. They were also set over the house of God as *stewards* of his household, to act for the interest and the honour of their Master, to attend to the wants of his family, and to distribute the divine *mysteries* or doctrines of the Gospel to its numerous members, according to their various exi-

gencies, capacity, and situation. They are to instruct, to admonish, to warn, to reprove, or to comfort, and in this manner to edify the body of Christ. The same comparison is made by our Saviour: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, [whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Luke xii. 42, 43. Some, by the word *mysteries*, understand the christian ordinances, as if the Apostle meant that it belonged to ministers, in modern phrase, to dispense or administer the *sacraments*; but this application of the term was an invention of a later age. The word is used by our Lord to signify those moral or spiritual instructions that are conveyed in *parabolical language*, and which he afterwards more fully explained to the disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. xiii. 11.) It may here mean those sublime truths, which were in a manner *hid* from the world, till they were made known to the holy apostles by the Spirit, and by them communicated to believers as they were able to bear them.

In this important trust, strict *integrity* is indispensable. 2. "Moreover (ὁ δὲ λοιπός, as to the rest) it is required (ζητεῖται, it is sought for) in stewards that one (τις) be found faithful." It is necessary that christian teachers, as overseers of the church, should feed the flock of Christ with the wholesome words of *sound doctrine*; that they watch for the souls of the people, as those who must give an account; that they warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, and be patient towards all men. They must, impartially and fearlessly, execute the laws of Christ, without respect of persons, though they should incur the censures of the disaffected, or even endanger their temporal interest. They must not allow themselves to be seduced by the pleasures of the world from their proper sphere, or conceal any part of the will of God from fear of giving offence to those who are living in sin. To point out the faults of others, is no doubt a painful task; but if they seek to please men, they cannot be the servants of Christ. They may be possessed of inferior talents; they may not have the eloquence of some, or the learning of others, and yet may honourably discharge their office in the church. But unless they are *faithful*, all other accomplishments will avail them nothing—they will endanger their own salvation, and ruin the souls of their hearers.

grace. This is evident from what is said (chap. xiii. 2.) and also from the language of our Saviour with respect to many who shall be *rejected* at the great day, Matt. vii. 22. If then they were not themselves the authors of these endowments, but had merely *received* them as a gift, "why did they boast (*καυχασαι*) as if they had not received them?"

The Corinthians, as before observed, complained that Paul had treated them like children, and had fed them with milk, instead of strong meat. The factious leaders, on the other hand, had pretended to give them more solid and suitable instruction, and they were now ready to congratulate themselves on the happy change they had made, as if they had escaped from a state of pupillage, and were treated as *men*. They considered themselves rather as *gainers* than *losers*, by the absence of the Apostle. "Now," they said, "we are full (*κακορεσμενοι*, filled), now we are become rich; we have *reigned* without you (*ἐκπαιλίσσασθε*, we have lived in a royal manner)." But they were under a sad delusion. They resembled the hungry man, of whom the prophet speaks, "who dreameth and behold he eateth;" or "as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh;" (Isa. xxix. 8.) but they would soon discover their mistake, when they *awoke* to the reality of their situation. They in fact resembled the church in Laodicea, who thought themselves "rich and increased in goods, and standing in need of nothing, but were poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) Such seems to be the meaning of the 8th verse, where the Apostle ironically quotes the language of the self-confident members of the church. Dr Mac-knight supposes this to be the language of the false teachers, who were maintained in opulence by means of their ascendancy over the people; but the other seems the more natural interpretation. Now the Apostle did not envy their happiness; "I would indeed ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." *he earnestly wished* (*οφιλον*) *that they did reign*; that is, that their souls might be in the prosperous state they imagined. He desired that their present confidence might proceed from a pure source; then indeed he could safely rejoice in their advancement, and might indulge the hope of *reigning with them* in the kingdom of heaven. The saints are described as reigning with Christ. Rev. xx. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

1. There is nothing in the language of the Apostle respecting christian ministers, to limit the expressions employed to the *apostles* and *primitive teachers* of the church. The same qualifications are still required of ordinary pastors. They also are servants of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God; and it is required of them that they be found faithful.

2. Though our judgment is not to be guided by the opinion of others, and though it is a small matter to be condemned by men, where our own consciences approve; yet it is not meant that we should be indifferent to the judgment of our brethren, or even to the opinion of the world. It is especially necessary that the ministers of Christ should have "a good report of them that are without." Neither is it meant that we are not to judge of the doctrines we hear, or of the conduct of professing christians, if our judgment be formed in consistency with christian charity. We are required to try the spirits whether they be of God, (1 John iv. 1.) and to judge of men by their fruits. (Matt. vii. 19, 20.)

3. What the Apostle says respecting the spiritual *gifts* of the primitive christians, is equally true of the spiritual *blessings* of the Gospel; we have nothing but what we have received. Our faith, repentance, love, hope, joy; our talents and opportunities of usefulness, are all the gifts of God, through Jesus Christ. Never let us boast of these, as if we had not received them. Never let us despise the characters or attainments of our fellow christians; for who maketh us to differ?

4. Let us frequently anticipate that solemn day, when God shall bring to light the hidden works of darkness; and consider how vain it is to hope that we shall escape detection, or be able to deceive our judge. If we are calumniated, and have no means of proving our innocence, let us refer our cause to him, who will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day. Though we should be conscious to ourselves of no defect in duty, let us not think that we are *thereby justified*; and let us pray that God would search and try us, and see what wicked way there is in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.) How apt are we to deceive ourselves as to

The contrast which follows (ver. 10.) between the character and circumstances of the Apostle, and those of the Corinthians, seems *ironical*, and conveys a keen reproof of their selfish and worldly spirit. "We are fools (*μωροί*) for Christ's sake, but ye are wise (*φρονιμοί*) in Christ." The factious teachers affected to consider the Apostle as a rude and illiterate person; and he was treated by the men of the world as a *fool*, on account of his love to the Saviour—the mysterious nature of his doctrine—his disregard of the rules of human policy—his choice of so disreputable and laborious a profession, and especially from his submitting to so many hardships without any apparent advantage. On the other hand, the Corinthians thought themselves endowed with superior sagacity—they were now instructed in the higher branches of Christian doctrine by their new teachers—they enjoyed a greater degree of christian liberty, so that they might safely indulge in practices at which *weaker consciences* scrupled; by prudent management they had also secured the good opinion of the world, and had advanced their own credit and reputation; "We are weak, but ye are strong." They were ready to despise the Apostle on account of his bodily infirmities, and his comparative deficiency in the art of eloquence; and perhaps on account of the depreciating sentiments he held respecting the value of human attainments. They viewed him as a *weak man* (*ασθενής*). They, on the contrary, thought themselves *strong* (*ισχυροί*). They imagined they were in no great danger of apostacy, and were able to maintain their ground amidst the snares and opposition of this world.—They were greatly *honoured*, on account of their natural talents and spiritual gifts, their wealth and influence in society, while Paul and his companions were treated with *contempt* as mean and obscure individuals—"Ye are *honourable*, but we are despised" (*ατιμοί*).

But indeed the Apostle did not wish to *conceal* the disadvantages under which he laboured. 11. "Even to this present hour," he says, "we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no settled abode (*αποστατούμεν*), and labour, working with our own hands." Thus, though he had been long engaged in preaching the Gospel, the most benevolent and important of all employments, he reaped no temporal advantage from it, but the reverse. He was often without the common necessities of life, and could hardly obtain the plainest *food*, or provide decent *apparel* wherewith to appear in public as a christian teacher—he

was repeatedly exposed to *insult*, from all ranks and classes of men. Witness his treatment at Philippi, where he was beaten and imprisoned—the violent usage he received from the Jewish populace, (Acts xxi. 32. ; xxiii. 10.) even the high priest commanded the officers of court to *smite him on the mouth*, (ver. 2.) he was obliged to *travel*, often on foot, from place to place, in the most inclement seasons, and sometimes could hardly obtain the shelter of a house. Besides his extraordinary labours in preaching, his attention was frequently called off from the proper duties of his office, to provide for his own necessities and for those that were with him, by *working with his own hands*. (Acts xviii. 3. ; xx. 34.) This was a great hardship, considering that he was entitled to maintenance from those who enjoyed the benefit of his ministry.

13. Nor were these the only difficulties with which he and the other apostles had to contend. Had they been cordially received and supported, their situation would have been comparatively *easy*. But they were exposed to the most injurious and contemptuous treatment, without any fault of their own, and while they sought the good of others. Yet, ever mindful of the precepts and example of their Saviour, they were so far from resenting the injuries offered to them, that they prayed for their persecutors—they meekly and patiently *bore* their malice, they mildly *entreated* them to desist, or earnestly *besought* them to be reconciled to God: “Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it (*ανιχημεθα*;) being defamed (*βλασφημουμενοι*) we entreat.” So far indeed were they from meeting with the respect and attention due to their office, as ambassadors of Heaven, that they were treated as the most detestable and *execrable* of men: “We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now,” (*ως αγρα*). Thus there was no prospect of any *termination* to their sufferings. There seems here an allusion to the language of Jeremiah, when describing the wretched situation of the Jews at the first destruction of Jerusalem, he says, “Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.” (Lament. iii. 45.) The word *πικραδαρμα* is applied to the receptacles for the offals of the public markets, and the sweepings of the streets; *πικρηνμα* signifies *filth scoured off*. In the *first* word, the Apostle is thought to allude to those unhappy persons who, in times of public calamity, being loaded with curses, were devoted in sacrifice to the infernal gods, to appease their anger. The meaning is well expressed by the exclamation of the

Jews, Acts xxii. 22. "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live!" The Apostle resumes the subject of his sufferings in his second Epistle chap. vi. 4, 5. and chap. xi. 23—28.

14. In thus enumerating his distresses, he did not mean to *shame* the Corinthians, as if he wrote on purpose to remind them that by their injurious treatment, they were greatly adding to his affliction. He did not *write these things to put them out of countenance* (*ντροπίζων*), but he *admonished them as his beloved children*. He wished to convince them of his affection, to prove his sincerity in his Master's cause, to *instruct* them in the true nature of Christ's kingdom, and to warn them against the indulgence of their passions, by the example of their veteran leader. In *this* he acted as a tender parent, who, while he *reproves*, is mainly solicitous for the welfare of his dear children.

15. They might easily indeed "heap up to themselves" teachers, who would flatter their pride, and pretend to instruct them in a more excellent way; but "though they had ten thousand masters" of this sort, they were only like *governors* who instructed children for hire (*παιδαγωγους*), and could never feel the same natural love for their souls which he felt, or manifest the same disinterested zeal for their best interests. "*They had not many fathers*, for in Christ Jesus he had begotten them, by means of (*διὰ*) the gospel." He therefore considered them as his spiritual children, and could not be indifferent to their progress in the knowledge of divine truth. The selfish domineering spirit of the *pedagogue*, is finely contrasted with the generous love of a *parent*.

16. As they might thus rely on *his* attachment, as their father in Christ, they might safely listen to his advice; he therefore *beseeches* them to follow his instructions, and instead of imitating the manners of the world, *to be followers of him*.

They thought they had made great improvement since the Apostle had left them; but the truth is, they had fallen far behind in their christian profession; and it was necessary that they should return from whence they had set out. *On this account* he had thought it necessary to send to them *Timothy his beloved son*, whom he had often proved to be *faithful in the Lord*, as a steward of the mysteries of heaven, that he might bring them back from their vain speculations, and "put them in remembrance of his ways that are in Christ, *as he taught every where, in*

every church." By the *ways in Christ*, we are to understand the doctrines he had taught them, and the regulations he had laid down for their direction as a church of Christ; and from the manner in which he alludes to them, it is evident that the primitive churches were all formed on one model, and not regulated according to the principles of expediency, so as to adapt themselves to the character of the people, and the genius of their civil government; on which footing many are now inclined to place the christian church. And in adjusting this model, we conceive the apostles were not merely framing some *prudential regulations* for the government of the church, till it obtained the sanction of the civil powers, but that they were *legislating* for the disciples of Christ in all future ages. (See some excellent observations on this subject in Mr Haldane's *View of Social Worship*, chap. 3.) Different conclusions may be formed as to the *precise constitution* of the first churches; but we conceive professing christians are bound to follow the scriptural model, *so far as they understand it*. And we protest against the latitudinarian principle above alluded to. See also chap. xi. 2.; xiv. 33.

18—20. But "some were puffed up, as if the Apostle were not coming to them." They imagined that he had preferred sending Timothy, because he was afraid to appear *himself*, and as they had little to fear from so young a man, they thought to prolong their *inglorious reign*. In this, however, they were greatly mistaken. For though he was now detained at Ephesus, on account of the promising appearance of things in that city (chap. xvi. 8, 9.) he assured them that he intended to *come shortly* to them, *if the Lord should permit*, and then "he would know, not the *speech* of those that were *elated*, but the *power*." That is, he would judge of the pretensions of the factious teachers, not by their fluency of speech, or rhetorical and philosophical refinements, but by their miraculous gifts, and by the influence of the truth on their conduct. "For the kingdom of God," he adds, "is not in *word* but in *power*." The religion of Christ was not established and maintained in the world, by the mere force of human *eloquence*, or of well-connected argumentation, but by the *powerful demonstration* of the *Spirit*, in his extraordinary and gracious influences. Neither does true Christianity consist in the *speculative knowledge* of its doctrines, but in the experience of its *power* on the heart. In a word, "the kingdom of God comes not with outward shew, neither

shall it be said of it, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of heaven is *within* you." (Luke xvii. 20, 21.)

21. There was therefore only one alternative, and it was necessary they should make their choice. 21. "Did they wish he should come to them with a rod, (*εὐ γὰρ ῥά*) or with love and the spirit of meekness?" By rejecting his authority, he would be laid under the necessity of inflicting temporal judgments, by his miraculous power (as in the cases mentioned, Acts v. 5. xiii. 11.), or he would be forced to *exclude* the refractory from the communion of the faithful, as *the rod* may signify; or, should they be brought to repentance, and submit to the authority of the laws of Christ, he would enjoy the unspeakable happiness of restoring them, in the true spirit of christian meekness, to his confidence and love.

REFLECTIONS.

1. From the account here given of the Apostle's sufferings, we may learn the power of divine grace in subduing his natural propensities, and rendering him willing to endure all things for the sake of Christ. He could not have given a more evident proof of the reality of his conversion, or of the sincerity of his faith. It is incredible that he would submit to such hardships, to propagate a falsehood. We see also the benevolence and gentleness of his spirit.—All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Let us be ready to be esteemed weak, foolish, and contemptible, for his sake. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Even he who was Lord of all, had no certain dwelling-place—had not where to lay his head.

2. Let christian ministers learn to endure hardship, from the example of this good soldier of Jesus Christ. Should we seek our own ease, interest, or reputation, as the first object of our attention? Shall we refuse to submit to shame, reproach, and poverty, to make known the Gospel to our fellow-men? or shall we despise the humble preacher of the Gospel, because of the obscurity of his external condition, or the comparative inferiority of his talents? Let us shew that we have not so learned Christ. Worldly honour and temporal prosperity are not necessary to render our preaching effectual; but it becomes us to be duly thankful for exemption from those evils to which the first preachers were exposed.

3. It becomes us to honour those who have been the instruments employed in bringing us to the knowledge of the truth. They may be supposed to feel a real affection for their spiritual children; and we have reason to suspect the motives of those who would alienate our hearts from them. But we must not implicitly follow any man, however distinguished; and so far as our duty to Christ is concerned, we must call no man father on earth.

4. All our resolutions respecting future plans, should be formed in humble dependence on the will of God. For this we have both apostolic example and precept. James iv. 15.

5. It is possible to have an extensive knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and even to preach them to others, with eloquence and success, while we remain strangers to its power.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—8.

THE CASE OF THE INCESTUOUS PERSON.

HITHERTO the Apostle had been occupied in correcting the unscriptural views which the church at Corinth had embraced, respecting the importance of human philosophy in illustrating the doctrines of Christianity, and the advantage to be derived from the cultivation of the arts of oratory, by the preachers of the Gospel. He now proceeds to the *main subject* of his letter, which is, to point out certain prevailing abuses in that church, which endangered the honour of the Gospel, and the peace and prosperity of the christian community.

And the *first* disorder which he notices, is the neglect of that salutary *discipline* which the Great Head of the church had instituted for the most valuable purposes. Those who were ad-

mitted into the primitive churches, were such as gave evidence of real conversion, so as to be considered, in the judgment of christian charity, as genuine saints. This is evident, not only from the inscriptions of the apostolic epistles, but from the whole history of the Acts. (Rom. i. 6, 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. Ephes. i. 1. Phil. i. 1, 5, 6. Col. i. 2. 1 Thes. i. 2, 3. Acts ii. 47. xi. 21.) As it was impossible, however, to prevent the reception of *hypocrites* and *self-deceivers*, by whom offences might be expected to arise, the churches were commanded to *exclude* such persons, when their true character was made manifest, or to *withdraw* from their communion, if they had not power to cast them out. (2 Thes. iii. 6.) As christians themselves are but *partially* renewed, it is not surprising if they are overtaken in a fault, and if the remains of their natural depravity sometimes prevails over the principle of grace. In the case of *private* offences, our Lord had enjoined previous remonstrance, and admonition; and in the event of the offender continuing impenitent, he was to be excluded from the society of the faithful. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee *alone*; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 15—17.) Where the offence was of a *public* nature, the offender was to be publicly admonished, according to the rule, "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear." (1 Tim. v. 20.) When a professing christian was guilty of a very *flagrant* crime, or lived habitually in sin, without shewing any signs of repentance, the church of which he was a member, was required to excommunicate him *without delay*, for the credit of their religious profession, for the good of the individual himself, and for the glory of God. This sentence was passed, not only *in presence* of the church, but by *their suffrage* and *authority*, accompanied with solemn prayer for divine direction, and with deep lamentation, on account of the dishonour that had been done to the cause of Christ.* The pastors of the church laid down the law of Christ respecting the case, and pronounced the sentence of excommunication. The decision was then *intimated* to the offending person; and if he appeared to

* See Lord King's Enquiry, c. 7. §. 3.

be brought to a due sense of the impropriety of his conduct, and to bewail the injury he had done, the church was commanded to receive him again into their fellowship, and to confirm their love towards him. "The laws of Christ," as observed by Dr Macknight, "do not, like the laws of men, correct offenders by fines, and imprisonments, and corporal punishments, or outward violence of any kind, but by earnest and affectionate representations, admonitions, and reproofs, addressed to their reason and conscience, to make them sensible of their fault, and to induce them voluntarily to amend."—"The wholesome discipline which Christ instituted in his church, at the beginning, was rigorously and impartially exercised by the primitive christians towards their offending brethren, and with the happiest success in preserving purity of manners among themselves." Then he adds, with great keenness, "In modern times, however, this salutary discipline has been much neglected in the church, but it has been taken up by gaming clubs, who exclude from their society all who refuse to pay their game debts, and shun their company, on all occasions, as persons absolutely infamous." (Illust. of chap. 5.) On the subject of *church discipline*, the reader may advantageously consult *Mr Innes' Sketches of Human Nature*, and *Mr James' Church Member's Guide*.

In the case before us, the offence was of a very aggravated nature. 1. "It is commonly (*ὅλως*, generally) reported (*ἀκούεται*) that there is fornication (*πορνεία*, lewdness of any kind) among you, and such fornication as is not even named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." It is supposed from what is said, (2 Epis. vii. 12.) that the father of the offender was still alive, which of course added the guilt of *adultery* to that of *incest*. Now it was of no consequence whether the marriage ceremony had been observed by the guilty pair, on this occasion, or not; for no pretence could sanction such an enormity. A similar abuse is indeed reckoned by the prophet Amos, among other corruptions of ancient Israel. (Amos ii. 7. See also Ezek. xxii. 10, 11.) But it was a crime which even the light of nature condemned; and the more virtuous and polished of the heathen nations held such illicit connections in abhorrence. Thus Edipus the Theban is represented in Grecian story, as having put out his own eyes, on discovering that he had unwittingly committed incest with his own mother; and Cicero, referring to a case of the same kind

with that here specified, calls it, "*scelus inauditum et incredibile*"—an unheard-of and incredible wickedness. In the same manner, Virgil, describing the slaughter made by Pallas in the war with Turnus, represents him as killing, among others,

"Anchemolum, thalamos, ausum incestare novercæ."

ENÆID, B. 10. l. 389.

"Who stain'd his stepdame's bed with impious lust."

DRYDEN.

Those who know the depravity of human nature, will not be surprised that such a crime should have been committed, especially when the licentious character of some of the converted Corinthians, in their heathen state, is considered; and when it is also recollected, that many have, in every age, been disposed, under pretence of christian liberty, to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. It has been observed, that while the conduct of the *man* is pointedly condemned, no notice is taken of the *woman*, from which it is inferred that she was a professed idolater, and therefore not subject to the cognizance of the church. This supposition is confirmed by what is afterwards said, ver. 12. "For what have I to do to judge them that are *without*?" But this was an additional aggravation of the offence, for it was casting a stumbling-block in the way of a heathen, whose salvation he ought rather to have sought.

Now the Corinthian church had neglected to execute the laws of Christ on this offender. Had the matter been *concealed* from their knowledge, they would not have been to blame; but it was a subject of general notoriety, and they could not be ignorant of the fact. It had already brought great scandal on the christian religion even among their unconverted neighbours. "It was *generally reported, or heard*," (ὅλος, may refer either to the *certainly* or to the *universality* of the report.) But the church, instead of proceeding immediately to call the delinquent to account, in order to wipe off this reproach, and to escape the danger of infection from such an example, seemed wholly unconcerned, and acted as if they had made a happy escape from the restraints of apostolic authority. 2. "Ye are puffed up (πνευματι, inflated), and have not rather mourned, in order that he who has done this deed (ὁ ἐποίησεν τούτο) may be taken away (ἐξέλθῃ) from the midst of you (ἐκ μέσων)." Here the Apostle purposely avoids

repeating the nature of the offence, as too shocking to be mentioned, according to the rule he lays down, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. v. 3.) Nothing like the usual lamentation made by christian churches in cases of discipline had been heard, on an occasion which so loudly called for it. It is thought by some, that the offending party may have been a chief speaker, or powerful leader of a faction, who *stood by him*, and overawed the faithful members of the church. But it has been justly observed, that, in the second epistle, where the incestuous person is spoken of as being *overwhelmed with grief*, (chap. ii. 7.), the factious teachers are still described as false apostles and deceitful workers. (chap. xi. 13.) It is more likely that he was a person of influence and property, which disposed the church to overlook his conduct, or deterred them from bringing him before them. But if *they* felt so easy under this reproach, the Apostle was not, on that account, to be deterred from the discharge of his duty. He was indeed at a *distance* from them *personally*, and there might be circumstances connected with the case unknown to him; but the offence spoke for itself; and he could therefore as confidently come to a decision upon it, as if he were *personally present*: being fully instructed in the mind of Christ respecting such offences. 3. "For I indeed, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have (as if present) already judged (*κεκρικα*) him who has acted in this manner." Some think that by the expression, "as absent in body, but present in spirit," is meant, that the whole transaction had been miraculously revealed to the Apostle, as when Elisha's heart is said to have gone with his servant, when he received the present of Naaman the Syrian, and when he reported to the king of Israel the counsels of the Syrian monarch. (2 Kings v. 26. ; vi. 9.) But would he, in that case, have referred to the *general report*? And the decision which he had pronounced in the case was as follows: 4, 5. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye and my spirit are gathered together, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (*εις ολιθρον της σαρκος*), in order that (*ινα*) the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The expression, *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, may imply, that the Apostle pronounced the sentence as an ambassador of Christ in his name, that is, by his authority; and then the words would belong to the preceding verse, or according to

our version, the church was to excommunicate the offender *in the name of Christ*, that is, with earnest prayer for his assistance, and in obedience to his authority. Some transpose the words thus, "ye being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" but the meaning is the same—for to assemble *in the name of Christ*, is to meet together in obedience to his law, and for the celebration of his worship. The sentence was not to be pronounced in a *private consistory of church officers*, but in a public assembly, by the whole body of the faithful. By the words, "my spirit," Dr Macknight thinks the Apostle means the *Holy Spirit*, by whom Paul was inspired, and who might therefore be called his spirit, and considered as confirming the decision; but it seems a very unusual expression, and not in the general style of the New Testament writers, where the Holy Spirit is introduced. In the assembly held at Jerusalem, to consider the question of circumcision, the Holy Ghost is carefully distinguished from the apostles. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." Acts xv. 28. All that is meant seems to be, that the Apostle would be present with them in *spirit*, so that they might rely on his approbation and suffrage. They were also to pronounce their judgment *with the power of the Lord Jesus*; they would have the sanction of his authority to give effect to their sentence, and to ratify the decision in the court of heaven. Thus our Lord says of the church, (Matt. xviii. 18.) in connexion with the rule formerly quoted, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." In other words, what has been called the *power of the keys*, is committed to every christian church acting agreeably to the laws of Christ. Various opinions have been entertained as to what is meant by *delivering the offender to Satan* (τῷ Σατανᾷ), *for the destruction of the flesh*. Some think the Apostle refers to some miraculous judgment or bodily disease to be inflicted by the agency of Satan, by which the corrupt passions of the flesh might be mortified; and that such distempers were frequently occasioned by the misconduct of the primitive christians, is evident from what is said, chap. xi. 30., where, referring to the abuse of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Nor can it be denied, that bodily infirmities are sometimes ascribed to satanic agency. Thus it is said of Job,

that Satan smote him with sore boils, chap. ii. 7. So our Saviour says of the woman who was bowed down, that "Satan had bound her," (Luke xiii. 16.) and Paul denominates the thorn in his flesh "a messenger of Satan." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) But to this it is objected, that the apostles alone had power to inflict miraculous judgments, and that it never was possessed by the church members *generally*. It is also represented as being contrary to the mild spirit of the Gospel, to make the censures of the church the means of conveying bodily diseases. It is further said, that had such an effect followed, some notice would have been taken of it, when the restoration of the offender is spoken of (2 Epis. ii. 7.) ; whereas the church is simply required to restore him to their communion. The subsequent language of the Apostle in this chapter, is also thought to confirm this view, where he simply directs them to put away from among them the wicked person. It is therefore supposed, that nothing more is meant by the expression, than that the offender, being excluded from the church, was to be considered as no longer in the kingdom of Christ, but as under the dominion of Satan, who is called the God of this world. Being thus led to consider the sinfulness of his conduct, he would, by the divine blessing, be induced to restrain his unholy passions, and become the subject of true repentance. Yet it may be doubted whether, after all, some supernatural judgment be not implied in these words, peculiar to the apostolic times.

There is, however, no countenance here given to those acts of excommunication afterwards issued by the church of Rome, by which the property, liberty, or life of the offender was affected. In all acts of discipline we must aim not at gratifying a revengeful disposition, but at the spiritual benefit of the individual; the church, even in the apostolic times, never pretended to decide the future destiny of her offending children, by consigning either body or soul to hell. On the contrary, this most solemn act of discipline was intended to promote the salvation of the soul, "that the spirit might be *saved* in the day of the Lord." The same design is intimated in another passage, where a similar act of excommunication is referred to, 1 Tim. i. 20.; speaking of Hymeneus and Alexander, the Apostle says, "I have delivered them unto Satan, *that they may learn not to blaspheme.*"

It may be doubted, since the church is no longer possessed of miraculous powers, whether in passing sentence of exclusion, it

be lawful to retain the phrase of *delivering* such a person *to Satan*, unless it be taken in the modified sense above mentioned.

6. The present self-confident and vain-glorious spirit of the Corinthians, was certainly very unbecoming, and much out of place. "Your glorying is not good." Yet, though they might not dare to *justify* such practices, they might plead that this was but a single instance, and that the great majority of the members were of a very different character. But were they not aware of the fatal effects of bad example, (chap. xv. 33.) and how insensibly false doctrines or immoral practices, if tolerated, would spread and corrupt the whole body? This sentiment is well expressed by an English poet:

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mein,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The Apostle would illustrate his meaning by a familiar example. *Did they not know that a little leaven, mixed with a quantity of dough, would soon ferment (ζυμῶσι) the whole mass?* Some ancient copies read (θῶλοι *corrupteth*), which indeed explains the original term. The same sentiment occurs in Gal. v. 9. Our Lord uses a similar figure on a very different occasion, to illustrate the gradual spread of the Gospel. Matt. xiii. 33. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." It was therefore necessary that an immediate stop should be put to the further progress of so fatal an injury. Leaven is here used as an emblem of the corrupt affections of the mind, any one of which deteriorates the whole moral system, as leaven sours the entire lump, if suffered to remain unbaked. At other times, it signifies false or erroneous doctrine. Thus our Saviour said to his disciples, "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," which is afterwards explained of their doctrine. (Matt. xvi. 6—12.)

In the 7th verse, there is an allusion to the care with which the Jews *sought their houses*, before the feast of the passover, that no leavened bread might be suffered to remain in them, according to the divine commandment. "Seven days shall ye eat unleaven-

ed bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Exod. xii. 15.) The modern Jews are so observant of this law, that they search every crevice of their houses with lighted candles (*See Jennings's Jewish Antiquities*, b. 3. c. 4.) In the same manner the Apostle orders the church to be thoroughly purified of improper characters, in order to the observance of the christian passover or Lord's Supper. "Cleanse out (*καθαροῦτε*) therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new mass, *as*, (or rather *when xathos*, *See Acts vii. 17.*) *ye are unleavened*," namely, by the exclusion of offenders. The Corinthians, by their profession of the Gospel, might be compared to unleavened bread, having been purified from their former idolatry and wickedness. If, however, they wilfully tolerated any disorderly persons among them, they would soon endanger the purity and peace of the whole body. If they wished to resemble a new or pure lump, a society of genuine disciples, of whom it might be said, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new," they must carefully search the house of God, that no unholy person might be found among them. So the Apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, (chap. xii. 15, 16). "*Looking diligently* lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau," &c.

In order to enforce the exhortation, the Apostle draws another point of resemblance between the Jewish and the Christian institutions. As the *unleavened bread* pointed out the necessity of purity of heart, so the *paschal lamb* was a type of Christ our great sacrifice. "For even Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us," (*ὑπὲρ*, in our place.) In like manner the evangelist John quotes a passage from Exod. xii. 46. where the original institution is described, as being fulfilled in the sufferings of our Saviour: "A bone of him shall not be broken." (John xix. 36.) The typical nature of the passover might be illustrated in many particulars. It was an apt emblem of our deliverance from spiritual death by the mediation of Christ Jesus: As, by the sprinkling of the blood of the victim on the lintels and door-posts of the houses, the Israelites were preserved from the sword of the destroying angel, so by the shedding of Christ's blood, sprinkled by

faith on the conscience, eternal redemption is obtained for all believers. But the great end of his coming was to destroy the works of the devil, to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Did not this lay them under the strongest obligations to a life of holiness, both as individuals and as a church? The death of Christ is here spoken of as a proper sacrifice; and the Jewish passover was viewed in the same light from the time of its first institution. Hence the Jews were commanded to inform their children, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover." (Exod. xii. 27). Some think the Apostle's language implies the communion of Jews and Gentiles in the christian festival; "even for us Gentiles, the passover has been slain."

Our Lord had instituted the ordinance of the Supper, immediately after the Jewish passover, to intimate that it was come in the room of that institution; to commemorate his death on the cross as an atonement for sin; and to illustrate the fellowship which believers have with him, and with one another, as members of the same mystical body. 8. "Therefore," he adds, "let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice (*κακία*) and wickedness, (*πονηρία*) but with the unleavened bread (*αζύμοις*, unleavened qualities, as M'Knight well expresses it) of sincerity and truth." By the *old leaven* the Apostle evidently refers to the sins of impurity, to which the Corinthians, in their heathen state, had been much addicted, including all other affections of the "old man," or corrupt nature; *malice* is concealed hatred, or that malignant spirit which takes pleasure in the distresses of others; *wickedness* (*πονηρία*) is a more open display of ill-will prompting to mischief. There can be no doubt that the Apostle, by the word *ἑωρταζόμεν*, *let us keep the feast*, refers to the ordinance of the Supper; this is eminently a feast of purity and love; here, if any where, all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envyings, and evil speakings, should be laid aside. Those who sit down at this table should be sincere and without offence. The word (*εὐλογισμία*, sincerity) is applied to transparent objects, which, being held up to the *sun*, discover no earthly particles. Here the outward conduct ought to correspond with the professed subjection to the truth. Hypocrites and nominal professors are *spots* in these feasts of charity, "feeding themselves without fear." (Jude 12). Dr M'Knight supposes, from the mention of the passover, that this Epistle was written shortly before the celebra-

tion of that feast, and "that the christians then observed the Lord's Supper with more than usual solemnity," but nothing can be more precarious than such a conjecture. To suppose that this ordinance was observed with greater solemnity at one season than another, is to give countenance to a refinement, which was the invention of a later age, and is too much akin to the distinction between *high* and *low mass* in the church of Rome.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How greatly is it to be deplored, that professing christians should be chargeable with sins which even heathens could view with abhorrence! Truly the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! How much reason have we to distrust ourselves, to flee from temptation, and to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!"

2. How great the goodness and the wisdom of the Head of the church, that he has appointed such wholesome laws for preserving purity of communion among the saints! Why should these rules be overlooked or neglected? The authority of Christ—the good of the offender—the prosperity of the church—the instruction and warning of others—the honour and success of the Gospel, are intimately involved in their faithful execution. How can the christian feast be rightly kept, if the old leaven of corrupt affections be suffered to remain; if those who are living in malice and wickedness be not purged out? Many admit the purity of the first churches, who affect to ridicule the proposal of restoring the primitive discipline, as impracticable. But are the laws of Christ incapable of being put in execution? or has Christianity changed its proper character since the apostolic times? Even the candid Mr Scott speaks as if the scriptural rules were in a great measure rendered inefficient in churches professing to act on these principles, "by family connexions, secular motives, party influence, and an undue regard to the rich above the poor," (*see his Prac. Observ. in loc.*) Is, then, no approximation to apostolic purity secured by those churches where the primitive discipline is observed? or, do the considerations here mentioned render all attempts to restore it entirely useless?

3. How solemn an ordinance is the act of exclusion from a

christian church! With what deep lamentation, and earnest prayer should it be accompanied? Happy is it when such a proceeding is followed by genuine repentance, and when, in every affliction the destruction of the flesh proves the health of the soul.

4. The command, to cleanse out the old leaven, if faithfully executed, would no doubt lessen the numbers, wealth, and influence of many churches; but we must do our duty, leaving all consequences to God. "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*"

5. The ancient calumny against the primitive christians, that in their secret assemblies they were guilty of incest and other crimes, is thought by some to have had its origin in the case before us; but this is uncertain.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 9—13.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST HOLDING COMMUNION WITH DISORDERLY BRETHREN.

THE Apostle had enjoined the Corinthian church to exclude the incestuous person from their fellowship, and to remove the old leaven from the house of God, in observing the christian feast. He now guards the sentiments he had expressed from being misunderstood. 9. "I wrote to you (*ἔγραψα*) in the letter (*ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ*) not to associate (*συναναμειγνυσθαι*, to mingle) with fornicators." It is thought by some, that by the epistle here spoken of, the apostle refers to a letter which he had begun to write, but afterwards *laid aside*, on the arrival of the messengers from the Corinthian church. To others it appears more probable that he refers to what he had said just before, ver. 7. about excluding unholy persons from their communion. Others suppose he had previously *sent* an epistle (now lost,) with some directions on this subject. Those who maintain *this* opinion, observe, that it seems most agreeable to the natural meaning of the words;—that some writings are unquestionably referred to in the Old Testament which no longer exist, (2 Sam. i. 18. 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 1 Kings iv. 32.) and that it is improbable that during the many years of active

labour which Paul spent in the ministry, he should have written no letters to the churches besides those which now remain. And it must be confessed that this seems the most probable opinion. But a sufficient number of these valuable writings is preserved, for the direction of the church in all points of faith and duty.

The Apostle did not mean that they were to have no intercourse with persons of this description in the *heathen world*: 10. "Yet not *wholly* (*κατὰ μέρος*) with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or with extortioners (*αεπταῖς*, the rapacious), or with idolaters, for in that case it would behove them to go out of the world." Such characters abounded so much on every side that it would be impossible to avoid all communication with them. The Corinthian converts might have *relations* of this description, to whom they were bound to shew affectionate and dutiful attention: Christian servants might have *masters*, to whom these characters were applicable, but to whom they must be in subjection with all fidelity: Most of them would have occasion to transact *worldly business* with such individuals; and all were bound to exercise the duties of courtesy and good neighbourhood towards all descriptions of men. Now, the Gospel does not interfere with the regulations of civil society, or dispense with the proprieties of social life; it does not enjoin a morose and unsociable disposition, far less does it require us to retire to some lonely wilderness, and to establish a separate community, apart from the rest of the world. This is contrary not only to the *genius* of Christianity, but to the grand object of the christian life. Believers are represented as the lights of the world, "holding out the word of life" to the view of their fellow-men, (Phil. ii. 16.) They are to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, and to shew the strength of their faith by *overcoming* the snares of the world. The vices here mentioned were extremely prevalent among the heathen; and the discharge of the duties of civil life did not imply any approbation of the *characters* of men.

But the design of the Apostle in writing *at present*, was, to warn the Corinthians not to associate with persons who were chargeable with these and similar vices, and who professed the christian name: 11. "But now I have written to you not to associate, if any one called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with

such an one not even to eat," (*μηδὲ συνισθῆναι*). Some attach the word (*οὐκ ἐπιτρέψαι*, called) to the last clause of the verse; and they render it, "If any brother be named or reputed a fornicator," &c. This gives a very good sense to the passage. Here I conceive he lays down a *standing law* respecting the character of those who are to be excluded from the Lord's table, though they should bear the *name* of Christ. If we are forbidden to eat a common meal with persons of this description, *a fortiori*, we are not to admit them to the ordinance of the Supper. If, as has been shewn before, by the expression, "let us keep the feast," the Apostle refers to the holy communion, then it is most agreeable to the scope of the passage, to conclude that he alludes to it *here*. And the nature of things supposes it. Are we to preserve greater strictness of decorum in our private entertainments, than in the celebration of a divine institution? Yet there are some who would scruple to admit individuals of doubtful character to their *family tables*, from a regard to their own honour, who do not hesitate to hold fellowship with them at the *table of the Lord*! Is not this to act the part of the ancient Jews, who profaned the name of God, and said "the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat is contemptible?" (Mal. i. 12). No superiority of rank—no dignity of office—no extent of knowledge, can excuse a christian church for holding communion with those who are known to live in the indulgence of these vices, in the face of this express prohibition of an inspired Apostle. The rule of Scripture is observed in many reformed churches, so far as respects *fornication*; but why is the *reviler* overlooked, which must include all profane swearers? why is the *drunkard*—why is the *rapacious oppressor* of the poor, passed over in silence? Some may ask, how are we to know such persons? What is the true nature of *covetousness*? It is easy to start objections; but such questions plainly impeach the wisdom and practicability of the rules here laid down. Persons of this description bring great dishonour on the christian name, and present a most injurious representation of the religion of Christ to heathens and infidels. By associating with them as *christian brethren*, we lead others to think that we are disposed to wink at their vices, because they belong to the same communion; the very reason that should call for faithful dealing. It exposes others to the contagion of their example, and serves to harden them in their

evil courses; whereas the execution of the laws of Christ against such offenders, might be the means of reclaiming them from the paths of vice; and, at all events, it would discover to them their true character, and would free the church from all imputation of conniving at their sins.

It is evident that the Apostle does not require the same degree of caution in our intercourse with *heathens*, as with those who profess to belong to christian churches—"who are called *brethren*." There is now a *third* class, namely, that of *nominal christians*, of whom the greater part of society in this country is composed. How are we to act towards *them*? If we refuse to hold intercourse with them, we must still go out of the world. But this intercourse must be of a *civil* kind; they are called brethren, i. e. christians; the very description of persons referred to in the text, and therefore we are bound not to associate with them in the *observance of christian ordinances*. Of course, the Apostle does not mean that we are to use no means to reclaim them from wickedness, or to refuse the common offices of humanity; we are "not to count them as enemies, but to admonish them as brethren;" but we must avoid all unnecessary familiarity with them. In addition to the enumeration here given, the Apostle commands Timothy to turn away from such who had only "a form of godliness," and who were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." (2 Epist. iii. 5.)

It is said by some that we must at least avoid *private intercourse* with such individuals, in the present decayed state of public discipline; but the neglect of discipline is the very evil to be corrected. Others observe, that we are not to form alliances with them by marriage; but who has a right to set aside the execution of the laws of Christ respecting the discipline of his church? Towards such persons we cannot exercise the duties of brotherly love.

That the Apostle did not allude, in his former letter, to the men of the world, is further evident from the fact, that they were not in communion with any christian church, and therefore were not cognizable by its laws. 12 "For what (right) have I to judge them that are *without*?" Persons in this situation cannot be called to account by the churches of Christ, which go out of their proper sphere when they attempt to bring the whole mass of mankind under subjection to the spiritual laws of Christ's kingdom.

It is only those who make a *profession* of the Gospel, or who are *within* the visible church, that we are required to *judge* by their fruits, in obedience to the command of Christ. But those profane persons, who, in countries professing Christianity, glory in being of *no religion*, shall not, on that account, sin with impunity, or escape the *judgment of God*. Even those who live in heathen lands, and have not the light of revelation, shall be called to account for those actions which they have committed against the voice of *reason and conscience*, as the Apostle elsewhere observes, (Rom. ii. 12. "them that are without, God judgeth." But it is the duty of christian churches to examine the character of their *own members*; this is a right which every individual member possesses, and of which he cannot lawfully be deprived. "Do not ye *judge* those that are within?" they are all equally interested to preserve the purity of the church, and to maintain the honour of the christian vocation. He again enjoins them therefore, to "put away from among themselves the wicked person," (13.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. In addition to the observations formerly made, it appears evident from this chapter that the power of excommunication is vested, not in the pastors or elders of the churches, to the exclusion of the people, but in the whole community of believers. Even the Apostle would not exclude the incestuous person, by his own authority, but directed the church to do it. It would also appear from other passages, that the primitive churches had the power of admitting new members and of re-admitting penitent offenders. Indeed the one right implies the other. Hence in writing to the Romans he says, "Receive him who is weak in the faith;" (chap. xiv. 1.) "receive ye one another to the glory of God." (chap. xv. 7). "I commend to you Phœbe our sister, that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints," &c. In the same manner the sentence pronounced on the incestuous person, is called a "punishment inflicted by many." That this right was possessed by the first churches, is known to all who are conversant in christian antiquities; and it was lost only by the decay of zeal and the progress of corruption. From this it would appear that these societies were voluntary associations, which had power to receive or exclude their own members, without being accountable

to any foreign tribunal. On this footing the congregational churches are now placed. It may be useful to collect the opinions of respectable writers of various denominations on this point, as I conceive it to be one of great importance, and intimately connected with the interests of practical christianity.

The sentiments of Dr M'Knight have been already quoted. Dr Mosheim says, "One of the circumstances which contributed chiefly to preserve at least an external appearance of sanctity in the christian church, was the right of excluding from thence, and from all participation of the sacred rites and ordinances of the Gospel, such as had been guilty of enormous transgressions, and to whom repeated exhortations to repentance and amendment had been administered in vain. This right was vested in the church from the earliest period of its existence, by the Apostles themselves, and was exercised by each christian assembly upon its respective members. The rulers or doctors denounced the persons whom they thought unworthy of the privileges of church communion; and the people, freely approving or rejecting their judgment, pronounced the decisive sentence. It was not, however, irrevocable; for such as gave undoubted signs of their sincere repentance, and declared their solemn resolution of future reformation, were readmitted into the church, however enormous their crimes had been; but in case of a relapse, their second exclusion became absolutely irreversible." (cent. 1. part 2. c. 3. sect. 10.)

Dr Campbell observes, "There were some things, however, which from the beginning were conducted in common by the pastors, the deacons, and the whole congregation. This appears particularly and most properly to have been the case in all matters of scandal and offence. In regard to these, it is the community that in strictness of speech is offended. The very word scandal or stumbling-block implies this. It is the community therefore that ought to be satisfied. It is to them our Lord appears (Matt. xviii. 15, &c.) to have committed the charge of admonishing delinquents, and even of excommunicating obstinate offenders. But I shall have occasion to examine the import of that passage in the Gospel afterwards. Only, it may be further observed, in confirmation of what has been now advanced, that the earliest practice of the church was conformable to the interpretation now given. Clement calls church censures, *τι προστάσις*

τα ὅσα τοῦ πληθους) the things commanded by the multitude, that is, the congregation." (*Eccles. Hist. Lect. 6*).

Dr Owen, after stating that it belongs to the office bearers of the church authoritatively to pronounce the sentence of excommunication, and to judge of the proper cases which call for this act, remarks, "Howbeit it cannot be denied but that the interest, yea, the power of the whole church in the fraternity of it, is greatly to be considered herein. For indeed wherever the Apostle treats of it, he doth not any where recommend it unto the officers of the church in a peculiar manner, but unto the whole church, and the brethren therein. This is evident in the places before quoted. Wherefore the whole church is concerned herein, both in point of duty, interest, and power: 1. In point of *duty*; for by virtue of the mutual watch of all the members of the church over each other, and of the care incumbent on every one of them for the good, the honour, the reputation, and edification of the whole, it is their duty, jointly and severally, to endeavour the purging out from among them of every thing that is contrary unto those ends. And they who are not concerned in these things, are dead and useless members of the church. 2. In *interest* they have also a concernment therein. They are to look that no "root of bitterness spring up amongst them, lest themselves are at length defiled thereby." It is usually said, that the good are not defiled by holding communion with them that are wicked, in a participation of holy ordinances. And there is some truth in what is said with reference unto wicked undiscovered hypocrites; or such as are not scandalously flagitious; but to promote this persuasion, so as to beget an opinion in church members, that they are no way concerned in the scandalous sins and lives of those with whom they walk in all duties of spiritual communion, openly avowing themselves members of the same body with them, is a diabolical engine invented to countenance churches in horrible security unto their ruin. But yet, besides that defilement which may be contracted in a joint participation of the same ordinances with such persons, there are other ways almost innumerable, whereby their example, if passed by without animadversion, may be pernicious unto their faith, love, and obedience. Wherefore, they are obliged in point of spiritual interest, as they take care of their own souls, to concur in the ejection out of the church, of obstinate offenders. 3. In

point of *power*; for the execution of this sentence is committed unto, and rests in, the body of the church. According as they concur or practise, so it is put in execution or suspended; for it is they who must withdraw communion from them, or the sentence is of no use or validity: this punishment must be inflicted by the many, who also are to restore him who is so rebuked. Wherefore excommunication, without the consent of the church, is a mere nullity. (*True Nature of a Gospel Ch.* p. 350. edit. 1801.)

Dr Watts observes, "It is evident to common reason, when such a voluntary religious society is instituted, the right of receiving or casting out members, or restoring them upon repentance, lies originally in the society itself; because the society itself is formed, and subsists, by the mutual compact of its own members. And whatever qualifications are required of persons, in order to become members of this body, it is the society itself that has an original right to judge whether the persons have these qualifications or not. It was upon the mutual acknowledgement of such qualifications, expressed or implied, that this society was first founded; and as a voluntary society, it must be maintained on the same foot, otherwise new members will be likely to be admitted and imposed upon them, to the great dislike and injury of the society. Indeed they may depute several particular persons of their number, whom they suppose better skilled therein, as elder and wiser, to act for the whole society, and particularly to examine into the qualifications of persons, and the merits of the cause, when members are to be received, or to be cast out; but they should never renounce their own original right." (*Foundation of a Christian Ch.* 1747.)

On the whole, a society of pious and intelligent persons in the present day, seems as capable of the exercise of this right as were the primitive christians. For christians of modern times, if we except the possession of miraculous gifts, are surely distinguished by the same characteristic features as were those of the first age. It seems surprising that, while such exertions are made, to restore to the people the right of choosing their own *pastors*, nothing is comparatively done to restore to the churches the right of choosing their own *members*.

2. The rules laid down in this chapter enable us to answer an objection which has frequently been raised against the conduct

of those who withdraw from Reformed churches, on account of their neglect of discipline. It is asked, Why leave a church whose standards are sound? Now, we are commanded, not only to shew our disapprobation of false doctrines, (2 John 10.) but to put away every wicked person. In the words of the learned Joseph Caryl, in his preface to the above work of Dr Owen, "it is not articles of faith, or profession of them in particular individual persons, that make an organised visible church." "It is men and women, not doctrine, that are the matter of a church, and these professing the faith, and practising holiness." (*Pref. to the work before mentioned.*)

3. As to the question, whether admonition and rebuke should be publicly administered, there can be no doubt that those who sin are to be reprov'd *before all*. But this I apprehend refers to the communicants or brethren of the church, not to the general congregation. To administer church censures in the presence of the thoughtless multitude, is to wound unnecessarily the feelings of the offender, and comes nearer to the nature of a civil penalty, than of a spiritual admonition. This is the true way to bring such censures into disrepute; and accordingly, under this constitution, they are either wholly omitted, or commuted for a pecuniary fine. As to the opinion, that the discipline of the church is one means of instructing the world, and therefore that all discussions of the offences of members should be conducted in presence of the congregation at large, it proceeds on a very superficial view of human nature; and wherever it has been put in practice, has cast a stumbling-block in the way of the ungodly. The primitive churches discussed every case of discipline only in presence of their own members.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—8.

CHRISTIANS ARE FORBIDDEN TO GO TO LAW WITH EACH OTHER.

THE Apostle now proceeds to point out another serious abuse which prevailed in the church of Corinth, namely, the practice of carrying their disputes about secular things before the heathen magistrates. 1. "Dare any of you, having an affair (*πρῶγμα*) against another, go to law (*αἰνεῖσθαι*, be judged) before the unrighteous (*ἀδικοὶ*), and not before the saints?" He expresses himself in a very abrupt manner, like a person who listens to a report of another which fills him with astonishment; as if he had said, "What is this I hear of you? Is it possible that you can act in a way so unbecoming your christian character, and so contrary to the duties you owe to each other?" As formerly noticed, many of the Corinthian converts appear to have been in prosperous circumstances, and possessed of a vindictive spirit. These circumstances would naturally give rise to litigation; and in frequenting the courts of law, a vast advantage would of course be obtained by the *rich* over their *poorer brethren*. The expences attending legal proceedings, in all civilized countries, whatever favourable regulations may be made in behalf of the poor, render lawsuits extremely vexatious to the lower classes of society, and almost exclude them from the benefit of having their causes legally tried. Besides, the unavoidable *delay* connected with judicial forms, is often the occasion of much loss and inconvenience, even where redress is ultimately obtained; and it is well known that wealthy suitors frequently avail themselves of the intricacies of law, to *prolong* the dependance of their civil actions. It may be also observed, that even in countries the most refined, and where the laws of mutual intercourse are greatly ameliorated by the indirect influence of Christianity, the agitation of differences between two

parties before a judicial court, necessarily produces an *irritation of feeling* very unfavourable to the exercise of that mutual affection which ought to subsist among the disciples of Christ. In the case before us, it is further to be recollected, that the Roman magistrates, as *idolatrous heathens*, were naturally hostile to Christianity, and of course were apt to allow their minds to be *biased* against the professors of the new religion. Having premised these things, it is necessary to explain the Apostle's meaning, consistently with the general principles of equity, and with other parts of the word of God. Observe, then, that he does not condemn the institutions of civil magistracy. This is evident from the rules he lays down Rom. xiii. 1—3. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," &c. Nor does he find fault with the civil law of the Romans, which was generally founded on equity, and remains a lasting monument of the wisdom of that people. Nor does he forbid christians to avail themselves of their civil rights *as citizens*; for he took the protection of the laws himself on different occasions, Acts xxv. 10.; xxii. 25; neither does he censure the whole body of heathen magistrates as *unjust*. The word (*adikos*) does not refer so much to their want of moral integrity, as to their ignorance of true religion. Many of them were men of integrity and honour, though it must be allowed that they frequently degraded the dignity of their office by corruption, and oppressed the people by their illegal exactions. Nor does he forbid christians to secure their property or their reputation against the *wanton attacks* and unjust aggressions of *worldly men*, by an appeal to the laws of their country. This would, in a great measure, derange the frame of civil society. But, as his language plainly implies, he disapproves of christians going to law with their *brethren*, especially before the heathen judges. Such a practice was exceedingly unbecoming the mild spirit of the Gospel.—It would necessarily give the judges an unfavourable impression of their character, and of course increase their prejudice against the true religion. It implied a distrust in the fidelity and honour of their fellow christians, as if greater impartiality and justice could be found in idolaters than in their own brethren. In a word, members of the *same church* are forbidden to go to law with each other; and on all occasions judicial proceedings should if possible be avoided, in matters of small moment, even with the men

of the world. It is much more agreeable to the spirit of Christianity, rather to suffer an injury than to resent it. (Matt. v. 39, 40.) Some object, that the Apostle only means to condemn the practice of frequenting the *heathen courts* of judicature, and to recommend that christians should appoint judges from among themselves; or in other words, establish *tribunals* of their own; and they tell us that this they might easily have done under the tolerant government of the Romans, who allowed the Jews to hold their own courts of justice: But what is this but to sanction litigation under another form? Allowing the judges to *profess* the *christian faith*, would this alter the obligation of brotherly love, or prevent the unhappy consequences above alluded to? We see that, even under all the advantages of British justice, the evils complained of still operate to a lamentable extent, namely, expense, delay, and irritation of feeling. These are inseparable from the complicated forms of judicial proceedings; and we hesitate not to say, that the same principles that rendered it improper for christians to sue each other before the *Roman* tribunals, render it equally inconsistent with their profession to bring each other before the courts of justice in *countries where the true religion is professed*. What then does the Apostle recommend? evidently the practice of arbitration. This, in every respect, is preferable to a suit at law. When differences unhappily arise between members of christian churches, they must refer their cause to the judgment of one or two of their *brethren* mutually chosen. These, if men of integrity, though possessed even of inferior gifts, are generally sufficiently well qualified to judge of matters of fact, and even to point out the rule of equity. Hence, in our own law, the origin of trial by jury. Now, in every church, persons of good sense and unimpeachable honour are to be found; and they will naturally feel a desire to see justice done, from a regard to their own character—from the interesting relation in which they stand to the parties—and from a wish to preserve the peace of the church. All unnecessary expense and delay will thus be avoided; and instead of allowing the passions of the disputants to become inflamed, they will act as peace-makers between them. It is one proof of the sad degeneracy of modern churches, that the members are allowed to go to law with each other, without being called to account for their obvious disregard of the christian rule.

To dissuade the Corinthians from litigation, the Apostle reminds them of the *dignity* of their character : 2. " Do ye not know that the saints judge (*κρίνουν*) the world ? and if the world be judged (*κρίνεται*) by you, are ye unworthy of the smallest acts of authority (*κρίτηριον ἐλαχιστον*) ? " According to our version, the verb *to judge*, is considered as in the *future* tense, but it seems rather to be in the *present*—had it been in the future, it would have been *κρινῶται*, not *κρίνεται*. The saints may be said already to judge the world, because they testify of it that its deeds are evil ; they virtually *condemn* the prevailing manners of the age by their holy, peaceable, and useful lives. It is also true that they shall finally approve the sentence of Christ against the wicked. Hence the language of our Saviour to the twelve, which may be applicable, in a lower sense, to the whole assembly of the just, of which they form a principal part. " Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*," Luke xxii. 28—30. Thus the saints are described as *reigning with Christ* ; as sitting with him on his throne, (See also Rev. ii. 26, 27.) It is not necessary to consider them as *assessors* to Christ, which would seem to imply that the Supreme Judge stood in need of their advice or assistance, which cannot be admitted. Some think that the Apostle anticipates the civil establishment of Christianity, when professing christians would be appointed to *fill the seats of justice* : but this, surely, would not be used as an argument to persuade them against going to law ! The words *κρίτηριον ἐλαχιστον*, are rendered by Dr Macknight, " the least seats of judicature ; " and if by this be meant the office of an arbitrator, the translation may be allowed : but, for the reasons above mentioned, we object to the supposition that the Apostle allowed of legal proceedings, even where the judges might profess the christian faith. The word *κρίτηριον* no doubt sometimes means a *judgment seat*, (James ii. 6.) but it seems here to signify, as Parkhurst renders it, a judicial contest or *controversy*. Were christians unworthy of being entrusted with the most trivial disputes ? The Apostle considered secular affairs as very *small matters*, compared with their spiritual privileges and exalted prospects. If then the world was judged *by them*, was it

becoming their high character, that they should submit to be judged by the world?

3. "*Did they not likewise know that they should judge angels*—how much more the things of this life (*ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνης*)?" By judging angels, it is thought the Apostle refers to the power which the church then possessed of casting out evil spirits: he may also allude to the effect of the Gospel in overturning the kingdom of darkness: but he may chiefly refer to the judgment which shall be pronounced on the fallen angels, at the great day. Thus the apostle Peter speaks of the angels, who kept not their first estate, "being reserved unto judgment," (2 Epis. ii. 4.) Now, though all judgment is committed unto the Son, yet it will add to the abasement and misery of these malignant spirits, not only to be judged by one in our nature, but to have the sentence approved by the *saints*, in their song of victory over the enemies of their king. (Rev. xv. 3, 4.)

4. *Whatever disputes they might have, therefore, relating to the affairs of this life*, the Apostle recommends them to *set those in judgment upon them*, (*καὶ ἑτέροις*) *who were least esteemed* (*ἐλαφίστους*) *in the church*." It is not clear what class of persons he here refers to. Some read the passage interrogatively, as if the heathen magistrates were meant. "Do ye set them to judge who are set at nought in the church" as impious idolaters? But is it likely that the Apostle would use such language respecting the existing authorities? or, is it agreeable to the spirit of the commandment—"Render therefore to all their dues—tribute to whom tribute—custom to whom custom—fear to whom fear—honour to whom honour?" (Rom. xiii. 7. 1 Peter ii. 17.) I therefore agree with the sentiment of Mr Scott, that the Apostle refers to the vain-glorious opinion which the factious party had of their superior gifts, which led them to *set at nought* their more humble brethren, who were in fact superior to themselves in genuine piety and experience, and were therefore quite competent to judge of secular disputes.

5—8. In *saying this*, he wished to *make them ashamed of their conduct*. They boasted of their wisdom and spiritual gifts,—could it then be possible "that there was not one wise man (*σοφός, οὐδὲς ἓως, ἢ* a wise man, not even one) among them, who would be able to judge between one brother and another; but brother must be judged by brother, and that before the unbelievers?" What availed, after

this, their professions of mutual regard? Was this calculated to remove the prejudices of idolaters, or to gain them over to the profession of the Gospel? Would *they* not rather ask what it had done for them, or what advantage *they* would derive from the change? They must acknowledge they were greatly to blame in this matter. "There was plainly a deficiency (*ἡμεῖς*) among them, that they could hold such controversies among themselves. Why did they not rather suffer injustice (*ἀδικίαν*)? Why did they not rather allow themselves to be deprived (*ἀποστερηθῆναι*)?" It would be far more to their honour to be the *injured party* than the *aggressor*, even if they should suffer loss. They would have the testimony of an approving conscience; they could commit their cause to Him who judgeth righteously; and as for the unhappy person who should wrong or injure them, especially under colour of *christian friendship*, he would forfeit his character as a brother, and he could enjoy no blessing with the fruits of his extortion: For "the getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro by them that seek death." (Prov. xxi. 6.) Instead of this, he would again repeat, that under pretence of justice, they "wronged and defrauded, and that their brethren." It is not to be supposed that they would directly transgress the law of *honesty*; but, as before hinted, by dragging the poorer brethren into civil courts, and exposing them to the consequences of a tedious and expensive litigation, they *in fact* defrauded them of the fruits of their lawful industry.

The whole of this passage is exceedingly animated—almost every argument is thrown into the interrogative form. The words, *do ye not know*, it has been observed, are repeated no less than six times in this chapter; which is a severe satire on the church at Corinth, which boasted of its superior gifts, and seemed to be yet ignorant of the first principles of Christianity. The Apostle, of course, supposes that the same law of brotherly love would prevent a christian from taking advantage of this peaceable and submissive spirit. Thus in fact they would be in no danger of being wronged or defrauded.

REFLECTIONS.

1. "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

themselves through with many sorrows," (1 Tim. vi. 10.) Well, therefore, did our Lord observe, when he was asked to divide an earthly inheritance, "take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses," (Luke xii. 15.) Are christians destined to reign with Christ in glory? how ill does it become them to grasp the perishing treasures of this world! What would be the feelings of the Apostle, were he to see how professing christians now oppress each other in courts of law? would he not conclude that there was utterly a fault among them?

2. Since the evil passions of men render civil tribunals necessary, how important that judges should be properly qualified—men of sound judgment, fearing God, firmly attached to truth, and hating covetousness. Such are the qualifications required in Scripture, (Exod. xviii. 21. Deut. i. 16—18.) What reason have we to rejoice in the inestimable blessing of a free constitution! Our judges and magistrates shew every disposition, in general, to render justice between man and man, without respect of persons or religious denominations. Let us pray for our king and all in authority, that we, under them, may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.)

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 9—20.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST SENSUALITY.

THE Apostle had severely reproved the Corinthians for carrying their civil disputes before the heathen judges, as being utterly inconsistent with the mild spirit of the Gospel, and with the design of christian fellowship. It was highly improper, not only as ministering to a revengeful disposition, but as affording the means of wronging and oppressing their poorer brethren. He now goes on to remind them, that those who were chargeable with unrighteousness of any kind, had no part in the heavenly inheritance. They have neither a title to it, nor meetness for it. Alluding to those who *wronged* their brethren (*adimunt*), he

asks, (ver. 9.) "do ye not know that the unrighteous (*αδικοι*) shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Into the holy city "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.) "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" (Heb. xii. 14.) *This* is the blessed privilege of the *pure in heart*. As heaven is a state of entire freedom from sin, and of perfect conformity to the will of God, it is evident that an unholy person, even supposing he were admitted to the divine presence, could enjoy no happiness there; on the contrary the employments of that blessed community would be utterly distasteful, and unsuitable to his inclinations; and consequently the views, dispositions, and character, must undergo a thorough change, before "any one" (*τις*) can enter into the kingdom of heaven. (John iii. 3.) Though eternal life is the gift of God, yet in its very nature it includes the *renewing of the mind*; and it is agreeable to the divine wisdom to adapt the faculties and dispositions to the *objects* of enjoyment. The Apostle therefore adds, "Be not deceived;" so in Eph. v. 6. "Let no man *deceive* you with *vain words*." *Such* are the plausible excuses which the wicked frame for their conduct; *such* are the arguments of those who would abuse the doctrines of grace for the purpose of indulging their licentious passions: he would therefore again repeat, that "neither *fornicators* (*πορνοι*), who indulge in illicit intercourse with unmarried persons; *nor idolaters*, who deny the only true God, and bow down to the work of their own hands; *nor adulterers* (*μοιχοι*), who unfaithfully break the marriage covenant; *nor effeminate persons* (*μπαλακοι*), who indulge in self-pollution, or are the objects of unnatural lust; *nor Sodomites* (*αρσενικοιτοι*), who give themselves up to those crimes which occasioned the destruction of the cities of the plain; *nor thieves* (*κλιπται*), who either violently or in a fraudulent manner, take possession of the property of another; *nor covetous persons* (*πλεονεκται*), who from love of gain, lay claim to more than is due, and withhold assistance from the needy; *nor drunkards* (*μυθουσι*), who indulge in the immoderate use of intoxicating liquors; *nor revilers* (*λοιδοροι*, upbraiders) who make use of profane or abusive language; *nor extortioners* (*αεπαγισ*), who rapaciously plunder the fatherless, or keep back the hire of the labourer—*shall inherit the kingdom of God*. "The repetition of the negative particle in this verse is very emphatical."—*M. Knight*. The most common vices of the heathen

world are here enumerated; would to God such crimes were not found among those who profess the true religion! Some have attempted to prove that the expressions rendered *covetousness* and *extortion* refer to the eager desire of sensual pleasure; but surely the *inordinate love of money* is as pointedly condemned in scripture as the indulgence of the animal passions. The Apostle makes a similar declaration, Gal. v. 19—21.

He now reminds the Corinthians, that *such* had been the condition of *some of them* in their unconverted state. But the Gospel had wrought a happy change in their state and character. 11. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Formerly, they were *defiled* by the pollution of sin; now, they had been *cleansed* (καταλουσαθῆναι) from its impurity, of which the washing of the body with the water of baptism was only an emblem; formerly they were unholy in their character, now they were *sanctified* (αγιασθητι) and set apart for the service of God; they were then exposed to the wrath of Heaven, and under the condemning sentence of the divine law, now they were *justified* from all things, and treated as righteous (δικαιωθητι) in the sight of God: and this change had been effected, not on account of any merit in them, or by any exertion of theirs, but by faith in the blood of Christ, in whose name remission of sins is proclaimed, and the gift of righteousness is imparted, and through the effectual energy of the Spirit of God, whose office it is to enlighten the understanding, and to renew the heart. Dr McKnight paraphrases this verse as follows: "But ye are washed with the water of baptism, in token of your having vowed to lead a new life, and ye are consecrated to the service of God, and ye are delivered from heathenish ignorance by the power of the Lord Jesus, and by the influence of the Spirit of the God of us christians given to you." Thus, all these lofty expressions are made to signify merely the possession of the external privileges of Christianity. This is to take an unwarrantable liberty with the language of Scripture; to be *justified in the name of Jesus* is certainly to receive remission of sins by believing in him. Those who enjoy this happy privilege, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; they are no longer under condemnation, (Rom. viii. 1. v. 1.) To be "sanctified by the Holy Spirit," is to be sealed by his gracious influences unto the day of redemption. Many are washed with the outward element, who are pure

indeed in their own eyes, "but are not yet washed from their filthiness," (Prov. xxx. 12.); and many are delivered from *heathenish ignorance*, who are not yet redeemed from their vain conversation, nor delivered from the dominion of sin. The Doctor seems indeed to have been aware that the view he had given was hardly tenable, and therefore he adds in a note, "or the passage may be restricted to those who were true believers, and really holy persons." Yes! we believe that the Apostle describes the character and privileges of genuine saints, and *such*, notwithstanding the disorderly conduct of some, he considered the generality of the Corinthian converts to be.

In the remaining part of this chapter the Apostle seems to argue with certain individuals in the church at Corinth, who maintained that the indulgence of the *sensual appetites* was not forbidden under the Gospel dispensation. They pretended that, as the Gentiles were exempted from the observance of the Mosaic law, respecting circumcision and the distinction of meats, they were also freed from those obligations which prohibited the indulgence of the *animal passions*, particularly fornication, though this was expressly declared by the apostles, to be one of those necessary things from which the believing Gentiles were required to *abstain*. (Acts xv. 20.) It is also to be observed, that by the same decree it was forbidden to eat things *sacrificed unto idols*, (verse 29.) yet we find, from the letters addressed to the seven churches in Asia, that there were persons who continued to teach the disciples to eat idol sacrifices, and to commit fornication, (Apoc. ii. 14, 20.) Such doctrines were peculiarly pernicious to the Greeks, and especially to the disciples at Corinth, who had been addicted to these vices in their heathen state. There were various arguments used by those teachers in support of their opinions; *these* the Apostle proceeds to notice, for the purpose of refuting them. 12. First, they pleaded that "*all things* were lawful for them," or in other words, that the grace of the Gospel set them free from the moral law as a rule of duty; an opinion in which they have unfortunately had too many followers in every age. Particularly, they insisted that all kinds of *food* were lawful to them, and that it made no difference what idolatrous use had been made of it, or in what place it was eaten. This sentiment the Apostle afterwards discusses more at large. (chap. viii. and x.) In the mean time, he merely observes, that though he might lawfully partake

of all meats, "yet all were not expedient," (*συμφικει*). Even with respect to such indifferent things, it might not always be proper to use our liberty; for example, if it would grieve a weak brother, or embolden him to sin: In that case, it would be most conducive to the advantage of another, that we should abstain. Dr Macknight says, "all meats are not proper, because they may be hurtful to the health, or too expensive." This is indeed *true*, but does not seem to be the meaning of the passage. Though no such danger were to be apprehended, though *all kinds* of food might be *lawful* in themselves, or free for use, yet he would not suffer his appetites so to *enslave* his judgment, that he could not readily deny himself when occasion required: "I will not be brought under bondage (*ἐξουσιασθῆναι*) to any." It is unworthy of a christian to make a god of his belly, or to be delicately nice respecting the pleasures of the table.

13. Another argument used by those who pleaded for such indulgences, was this, that the Creator, by furnishing such a variety of provision for the human race, evidently intended that they should freely avail themselves of the means of enjoyment which his bounty had provided, that in short, it was the *design* of food to satisfy the appetite, and that the body was so organized as to require and relish its proper nourishment. Their favourite maxim was, "meats for the belly, and the belly for meats." This is true, in a restricted sense, when moderation and temperance are observed. But it was never designed that the gratification of the bodily appetites should constitute the main business of life, or be viewed as the proper happiness of man. The necessity of daily nourishment proves the frailty and imperfection of our present condition. It is peculiar to that state, and shall cease with the dissolution of our mortal part; *God shall destroy*, or abolish, (*καταργησει*) both the meats and the digestive organs. The body shall be raised from the grave spiritual and incorruptible, it shall no more feel hunger or thirst, and shall leave all its infirmities behind. "They that shall be counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 35, 36.) But if the indulgence of the fleshly appetite were *essential* to our well-being, it would not be *done away* in the glorified state.

The abettors of the same licentious doctrine, maintained that the gratification of the *sexual passions* was an original law of nature, arising from the constitution of the body, and therefore it was equally harmless as the indulgence of any other appetite. They maintained, in short, that "the body was for fornication;" and it is observable that a similar argument has been employed by modern free-thinkers. Now, though the Creator had provided for the welfare and continuance of the species, by making the sexes dependant on each other, it could never be supposed that he had formed the human body for the unhallowed purpose of *prostitution*. This would entirely defeat the original design of marriage, would introduce wretchedness and misery into the world, and would place man on a level with the irrational creatures. On the contrary, he had made man after his own image, for his own glory, and to act as his obedient child. Even his *body* had been designed as a living temple for himself to dwell in, and his *soul* was endowed with suitable faculties to know, love, and enjoy him, "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." This is especially true respecting his redeemed people. He has bought them with an infinite price, and constituted himself their true portion and happiness. He consecrates their body to himself as his holy temple, and he died to redeem the body, as well as the soul, from eternal death. In token of this, he had assumed our nature into union with his own, "and God had both raised up the Lord Jesus" in the same body from the grave, as a pledge and pattern of the resurrection of the just, "and shall (in due time) raise us also by his own power," 14. As the body is destined to this high honour, we are bound to preserve it *pure*, by chastity and temperance. Every christian should know "how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence even as the Gentiles who know not God." (1 Thess. iv. 4, 5.)

The next argument which the Apostle brings forward to shew the importance of *chastity*, is taken from the close union that subsists between Christ and the members of his mystical body. So intimate is this union, that even the *bodies* of believers may be considered as constituting a part of himself. Thus he asked the Apostle before his conversion, while engaged in injuring his saints, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" (Acts ix. 4.) and he considers the favours bestowed on them as done to him-

self: "In as much as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it *unto me*." (Matt. xxv 40.) So here, 15. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? Let it not be (*μη γινωσκετε*)." Let not such an impious thought be entertained for a moment; let not that body, which has been redeemed at such a price, be degraded to so base a purpose. They might startle at this bold figure; yet such would be the undeniable consequence of indulging their sensual passions. Besides, it was strictly agreeable to the spirit of the Old Testament Scriptures; "did they not know that he who is joined to an harlot is one body (with her)?" This could not be doubted; for the Creator, when instituting the law of marriage, had represented the union between husband and wife as so intimate, that they may be said to have no longer a separate existence, "The two (*α δυν*) he said, shall be one flesh," 16. Now the same might be said of the *unlawful intercourse* between persons of different sexes; not that such temporary connections can be viewed as equivalent to regular marriage, as some profanely infer, but that those who live in whoredom must be considered as having the *same mind*, and the *same vicious dispositions*. Consequently, the slave of sensuality effectually separates himself from the glorious Head of the Church, and has no longer any vital union with the Lord Jesus. This follows from the nature of this mystical union; for as the married pair are considered as one flesh, so "he that is joined to the Lord is" viewed as "*one spirit* with him," 17.; not that his soul is lost or swallowed up in the Deity, according to the doctrine of the mystics, but because he is spiritually united to the Saviour by an intimate bond. They are *one* in sentiment; in affection, and in interest. Nothing shall separate us from his love, and we should therefore study to have the same mind in us that was also in him, to imbibe his heavenly disposition, to walk in his footsteps, and to imitate his example. But nothing can be more contrary to the mind of Christ, than the indulgence of vicious passions. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8.)

18. The Apostle would therefore earnestly warn them to *flee fornication*, as they would escape from a most dangerous and powerful enemy, from whom it is better to retreat, than to run the hazard of being defeated by engaging in an unequal contest

where so "many strong men have been slain," (Prov. vii. 26.) Thus Solomon speaking of the strange woman, says, "Remove thy way far from her, come not nigh the door of her house." (Prov. v. 8.) Here flight is victory; and he is most secure who is most distrustful of himself; to tamper with such temptations, to hesitate when we ought to resolve, is almost the sure forerunner of disgrace. No parley must be held with such a foe—no terms must be listened to. The charming voice of the syren only allures the mariner towards rocks and quicksands. We must avoid every incitement to this vice, especially sloth, idleness, and luxury. It is peculiarly dangerous to *youth*, when the passions are strong, and the judgment is not matured; and accordingly the Apostle exhorts Timothy to "flee from youthful lusts." (2 Epis. ii. 22.) Thus it was that Joseph obtained so glorious a victory, when tempted to commit adultery; "he hearkened not to his mistress to be with her." (Gen. xxxix. 10.)

Besides the danger of being overcome, the Apostle would mention another argument, arising from the fatal consequences of impurity, in ruining *the health*. Other sins chiefly affect and debase the mind—*this* weakens and wastes the body, and is the forerunner of disease and death. "Every sin that a man commits is without (*without*) the body, but he that commits whoredom sinneth against his own body." Here the Apostle seems to glance at a very common error, namely, that no injury is done to others by the unrestrained gratification of the sensual appetites; it is not like robbery or murder, where the life or property of another is violated. Even allowing that this were *true*, he answers, yet the greatest injury is done by the sensualist *to his own body*, which he is bound to honour and to cherish. He enslaves it to his own imperious lusts; and he introduces into it painful and loathsome distempers. The same thing may be said of gluttony and drunkenness. But, indeed, the votary of sensuality does the most serious injury to *others*, by tempting them to similar excesses, and debasing the public morals by his example. He is, besides, guilty of a species of suicide, "as every one must know (to use the words of Mr Scott) who is acquainted with the horrible effects of lewdness in populous cities, and with the vast multitudes who are annually cut off, in early life, and in the most deplorable manner imaginable, by the various diseases with which it hath pleased God to shew his abhorrence of it." It is not therefore *true* that the *body*

is made for fornication; for "because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience." (Eph. v. 6.)

The Apostle further reminds the Corinthian converts, that by indulging in sensual pleasures, they would *deseccrate the temple of the Deity*, who dwelt in their bodies by his Holy Spirit. 19. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom (οὖ) ye have from (ἀπο) God?" He had formerly applied the same figure to the church *collectively*, (chap. iii. 16.) This being the case, it behoved them to keep their heart with all diligence, and to suffer no impurity to remain within, which would be offensive to the Divine Majesty. But they must be aware, that a mind polluted with sensual desires, and a body given up to illicit pleasures, could never be considered a suitable residence for the divine Spirit. It was rather to be viewed as a "haunt of every foul spirit—a habitation of devils." (Rev. xviii. 2.) This Holy Spirit the Corinthian converts had *from God*, and he still inhabits the souls of true believers, by his gracious operations, as has been already proved.

The last argument which the Apostle adduces, is the consideration of the *property* which God has *in us*, not only by right of creation, but by right of *redemption*: "Ye are not your own," to live according to your own pleasure, or to dispose of your bodies as you think proper; "For ye are bought (κτλησθητε) with a price, (τιμη) therefore glorify God with (εἰς) your body and your spirit which are God's," 20. The same argument is employed by the apostle Peter, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (ἐλυτρώθητε) with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the *precious blood* (τιμια αἱματι) of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Epis. i. 17—19.) Here the price is expressly specified, which is only *understood* in the passage before us; a plain evidence of the doctrine of our redemption by the blood of Christ, as is taught in many other passages. (Ephes. i. 7. Rom. v. 9. 1 John ii. 2. Acts xx. 28. Matt. xx. 28.) Thus dearly purchased, it behoved them to *glorify God* with their *bodies*, by yielding their members as instruments of righteousness unto him. (Rom. vi. 13.) Thus our hands should be employed in honourable labour, or in acts of mercy; our feet should carry us to the courts of the Lord's house—to the bed of

the sick—or to the cottage of the poor; our tongues should be employed in the instruction of the ignorant, or in celebrating the praises of redeeming grace. We glorify God with our *spirits*, when we exercise our intellectual and active powers in contemplating his works—in studying his word—in seeking after more comprehensive views of his character, and increasing conformity to his moral image. When, in short, our imagination no longer wanders on forbidden objects, but dwells on the glories of the heavenly state—when our memory is stored with spiritual knowledge—when our affections center in God as our chief joy; and when we devote those talents which he has given us, not to the pursuits of merely *secular* knowledge, but to the improvement of ourselves and others in virtue and holiness.

“ Father of light and life—thou Good supreme !
 O teach me what is good—teach me thyself !
 Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
 From every low pursuit, and feed my soul
 With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure ;
 Sacred,—substantial,—never-fading bliss !”

REFLECTIONS.

1. What a melancholy picture is here given of human nature ! How true the declaration, that all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth ! How false the estimate that is often made of the state of the heathen world ;—not only among barbarous tribes, but among the Greeks and Romans, were crimes perpetrated without remorse that are not fit to be named. Of course, wherever these vices prevail, the unhappy perpetrators cannot inherit the kingdom of God. How deplorable then the condition of the heathen ! Shall we be indifferent to their spiritual necessities, and refuse to send them that life-giving word which alone can set them free ?

2. How great the power of divine grace ! It can change the heart of the most flagitious. It can cleanse the soul from the deepest stains. Christians may arrive at some happy measure of assurance as to their spiritual state. The Apostle acknowledges the Corinthians as *already* justified ; but this is always accompanied with a change of heart by the Spirit of God. The apo-

the lay little stress on the *order of arrangement* in enumerating spiritual blessings. Justification absolves from guilt, and opens a channel for the communication of sanctifying grace.

3. We are reminded, that even "the covetous man is an idolater," that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer," and that "whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults!"

4. We learn the dignity of the christian character. The saints are bought with the blood of Christ; united to him by an indissoluble bond; formed *for himself* to shew forth his praise; even their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and "he that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken their mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in them." (Rom. viii. 11). Could more powerful motives to universal holiness be conceived?

5. We see the wisdom and goodness of God, who has hedged up the paths of vice by so many thorns, and who has so identified sin and misery, that the one always attends the other. Well might the Apostle ask "what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of these things is death."

6. It is remarkable that the same arguments, refuted in this chapter, have been adduced by modern infidels in defence of sensual gratifications. Lord Herbert, Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Hume and Voltaire, denied that the indulgence of the sensual passions was a subject of moral blame, and maintained that the dishonour connected with it, is merely the consequence of *political arrangements*, or the dictate of public opinion. (*See Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures*, vol. 1. p. 31).

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—15.

ON MARRIAGE.

It would appear, from the beginning of this chapter, that the church at Corinth had addressed a letter to the Apostle (which is now lost) requesting his opinion and direction concerning various *cases of conscience* that were disputed among them. Had *that* Epistle been preserved, it would have thrown great light on many passages in this letter, which refer to particular enquiries contained in the other. The *first* question to which he directly alludes “concerning those things about which they wrote to him,” is, that which respected the lawfulness or expediency of marriage.

Among the heathen nations, this institution had fallen into great confusion; partly by the introduction of polygamy, and the facility with which divorce was obtained on frivolous pretences; and especially by the dreadful prevalence of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, which was utterly inconsistent with the purity of the Gospel dispensation. On *this* point the Apostle had already given his opinion in very strong terms, (chap. vi.) and he now proceeds, with great delicacy and propriety of expression, to explain the law of honourable marriage as originally instituted for the good of mankind. It is further to be observed, that the Jewish teachers considered it unlawful for a man, after arriving at mature age, to remain unmarried, and laid down many trifling rules for the conduct of the married pair. On the other hand, an opinion began to be entertained in the church, which afterwards greatly prevailed, that the state of marriage was inconsistent with *strict purity*, and was unfriendly to the cultivation of the intellectual and moral habits. This opinion seems to have been borrowed from a certain sect of Jewish ascetics, denominated Essenes, who affected an austere and retired life, and who, according to Josephus, “neither married wives nor

were desirous to keep servants, as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives rise to domestic quarrels." (*Antiq. b. 18. c. 1. § 5.**) Some, again, maintained that, as the Jews under the law were commanded to *put away* their strange or idolatrous wives, (Ezra x. 2, 3.) it was unlawful, under the Gospel, for *believers* to continue in the marriage connection with *unconverted persons*. To all these discordant opinions allusion is made, in the course of this chapter.

In these circumstances, the minds of the disciples at Corinth were greatly perplexed, and they stated their doubts to the Apostle, as an *inspired person*, who was able to declare the will of God on this important subject. The marriage relation is the foundation of all others, and when rightly formed, is productive of many advantages to the human race. Even in a state of *innocence*, the happiness of man was incomplete till God had provided a help suitable for him. Much more, in his present fallen and frail condition, does he stand in need of one who shall share his joys and sorrows. From this relation spring the endearing names of father and mother, brother and sister. Children are provided for, during the tender years of infancy and childhood; and nature teaches *them* to nourish and requite their parents in their *old age*. Well regulated families are of the greatest consequence to the good order and prosperity of states. They may be also considered as *nurseries for the church*, where the children are trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This relation should be formed, not in a hasty and thoughtless manner, but with prudent caution, and in the fear of God. Neither beauty, nor riches, nor personal accomplishments are to be the rule of choice; but similarity of disposition, mutual esteem, and decided evidence of genuine piety. When marriage is entered into with *these views*, a greater measure of cares may indeed be anticipated, but the divine blessing may be humbly expected. The Apostle has been thought to be unfavourable to the marriage state, in what he advances in this chapter; but this opinion arises from not considering the peculiar circumstances to which he alludes, and the situation of the church, *at the time he wrote*. Some have supposed that he gives merely his *private judgment*, and does not write

* Such also appears to have been the doctrine of the ancient Gnostics.—Moshem's *Eccles. Hist. cent. 1. p. 2. c. 5. § 3.*

from inspiration ; and this is grounded on some expressions which, we shall afterwards shew, are capable of a different construction. This point is proved in a clear and satisfactory manner, by Dr Macknight in his note on the second verse. (*See also note 1. in the Appendix to Dr Wardlaw's valuable Discourses on the Socinian Controversy.*)

It is now time to advert to the Apostle's reasoning in this chapter. In opposition to the sentiments of the Jewish rabbis, that a state of celibacy was *unlawful*, he declares that it is an *honourable thing* (καλόν) for a man to abstain from marriage, ver. 1. In making this assertion, he seems to have a special reference to the persecuted state of the church at that time, as he afterwards explicitly mentions, (ver. 26.) He may also allude to those who preferred the single state on account of the greater facilities it afforded for promoting the success of the Gospel. Nevertheless, considering the depravity of human nature, and the strength of human passions, he recommends the marriage union in general, as a preservative from those licentious practices that prevail so much in the world. "On account of fornications (διὰ τὰς πορνείας, lewdness of every kind) let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband," (ver. 2.) Here he virtually condemns the practice of *polygamy*, as contrary to the design of the Creator, and destructive of the respect and honour due to the female sex. (Mal. ii. 15.) Those who are thus related, are bound to consult each other's happiness, as being no longer two, but one flesh, ver. 3, 4. It is their duty to guard against every thing that might ensnare them into incontinence, or defeat the great end of this institution, ver. 5. They might withdraw from each other's society during those seasons that were set apart for fasting and prayer, on account of some domestic affliction, or when the church was called to extraordinary humiliation, on account of some uncommon calamity. But this must be with mutual consent, and must not be unnecessarily prolonged beyond the appointed season, lest Satan should tempt them to irregular courses. Thus the prophet Zechariah predicting the future conversion of the Jews, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, represents them as appropriating a season for deep mourning, when "every family shall mourn apart, and their wives apart." (chap. xii. 14. See also Exod. xix. 14, 15.) On this verse, the church of Rome enforces the celibacy of the clergy, because they must give themselves continually to the

word of God and prayer.—A more groundless inference could hardly be imagined ; for the Apostle evidently condemns every thing that would lead to incontinence, *under pretence of engaging in the duties of religion.*

As to the *expediency* of forming this connexion, much would depend on times, circumstances, and natural constitution ; no express *rule* could be laid down for all cases, but a *permission* is granted to every man to act in this matter as he might think to be most conducive to his own safety and happiness, to the honour of religion, and the glory of God. This seems to be the meaning of the sixth verse. “ I say this (κατα ευνοiam) *by way of permission*, and not (κατ’ εντολην) as a *commandment* :” that is, he would *permit* every man to marry if he chose, but he would not *command* him. The sense of the following words is not so obvious. 7. “ For I wish (βωλο) that all men were even as myself.” It is supposed by some, that the Apostle had been once married, and was now a widower. This however is uncertain. At any rate, he was now unmarried, and was perfectly satisfied to remain in a single state. He therefore wished, not surely that marriage should be generally disused by the disciples of Christ, as some have maintained, but that all unmarried men could live as chastely as he did, or submit with as much cheerfulness to the inconveniences of this situation. But of this, every individual would be the best judge in his own case. “ For every one has his proper gift (ιδιον χαρισμα) from God ; one in this manner, (ουτως) and one in that.” If the unmarried had reason to think they had received the gift of continency, they would do well to continue as they were. 8, 9. “ I say, therefore, to the unmarried (αγαμεις) and to the widows (or widowers, χερεις) it is good (καλον) for them if they remain even as I.” But it was never the design of the Gospel to *ensnare the souls* of men, by imposing on them restrictions and austerities which they might find incompatible with the calm and faithful performance of their religious duties. If, therefore, they could not live chastely (εγκρατειουσαι) in a single state, let them by all means marry, for it is better to marry than to be enflamed (πυρρουνθαι) with restless passions. Dr Doddridge renders the first clause of this last verse, “ if they have not such temperance ;” and indeed there is nothing in the Greek text corresponding to the English word *cannot*, the insertion of which has given an unnecessary handle to the Roman Catholics. See also Matt. xix. 11.

On the whole, if the unmarried judged it best for their temporal comfort, and spiritual advantage, to change their condition, he would not condemn them on that account, or allow the opinion, that the marriage state was inconsistent with christian purity. Nor would he permit the married to condemn those who judged it most prudent to remain *as he did*; for persons in this situation enjoy greater advantages for devoting their whole attention to the service of God, and the good of their fellow-creatures.

With respect, however, to those who were already married, the law was express, and there was no room for any doubt or uncertainty. 10. "To the married, *not I* command, but the Lord," i. e. not *only I*, but Christ himself. The Apostle means that our Lord had already determined the rule of duty in this case, and his decision was infallible, "Let not a wife be separated (*χωρισθῆναι*) from her husband." The words of our Saviour in Matt. v. 32. seem to be here alluded to. The Jewish doctors greatly abused the permission of divorce under the Mosaic law, by allowing that a man might put away his wife for every trifling cause. Matt. xix. 3.) This opinion is severely censured by our Lord, and he several times declares that "whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is [otherwise] divorced, committeth adultery." This he confirms by a reference to the original institution (ver. 4—6.) and then he adds, "what therefore God hath joined, let not man separate or put asunder," (*χωρῖσι*) where it is observable, the same word is used which the Apostle employs in this passage. According to the law of Christ, therefore, divorce is only lawful on the ground of infidelity to the marriage vow.

It might indeed happen, that from the violence of his temper or the irregularity of his habits, the wife might find it unsafe or impossible to live with her husband. In that case, it would be lawful for her to leave him; but even then, she must not form any new connexion. It would also be her duty to endeavour by every means to remove the cause of disagreement, and to bring about a reconciliation: 11. "But if she even depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." The same rule is applicable to the other party: "Let not the husband put away his wife," (*αφαισῆναι*). Were this rule not adhered to, it would defeat the design of marriage, and open a wide door for the grati-

fication of irregular passions, under pretence of *incompatibility of temper*. The same authority forbids those who have been lawfully divorced from co-habiting again. (Jer. iii. 1.)

12, 13. *But to others*, (τοις δι' αλλοις) who were not laid under the same necessity of separating from their unbelieving partners, the *Apostle commanded*, "If any (christian) brother have an unbelieving wife, and she be well pleased (συνεδομαι) to dwell with him, let him not put her away; and a (christian) woman having an unbelieving husband, and he be well pleased to dwell with her, let her not put him away," (μη αφητε αὐτον). It is observable, that the very same terms are used with respect to both parties, to intimate that they enjoy equal rights, and that the same law is applicable to the husband as to the wife. Our translators have varied the expression in the last clause, though the original words be the same, to avoid the appearance of impropriety in the supposition of the woman *putting away* her husband. It might happen that the idolatrous party, from motives of humanity or affection, might be still inclined to live with the party converted, notwithstanding their different sentiments respecting religion. In that case, it was the duty of the believer cheerfully and faithfully to perform his or her obligations. Indeed, it would be in general for their own comfort, and for the honour of the gospel, to avoid the painful necessity of separation. It was the more necessary to mention this, on account of the opinion before alluded to, that the marriage covenant was dissolved by either of the parties embracing Christianity, in the same manner as, under the Old Testament, the Jews had been enjoined to put away their strange wives. This was necessary under that dispensation, in order to preserve the knowledge of the true God, which would soon have been lost by intermarrying with idolaters. But it is contrary to the genius of the christian faith, which is designed for the benefit of all nations. This the Apostle himself enjoined, not as his own private opinion, but as an inspired command superadded to what the Saviour had said. "I speak, not the Lord."

In order still more to reconcile the minds of those who were married to unbelievers, to their situation, the Apostle adds, 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife (αγιαζεται ως η γυναιξ), and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; for then were your children unclean (ακαθαρτα), but now are they holy (οις δε αγιασθη)." These words have given rise to much

discussion, and I would give my opinion with much diffidence, as they are not unattended with difficulty. The generality of Baptist writers, finding this passage adduced as an argument for infant baptism, assert that the word *αἱρεῖς* is equivalent to *legitimate*, and that the Apostle means to say, that were the marriage of an idolater with a christian unlawful, then the children of such marriages would be illegitimate; but I cannot find a single passage of Scripture where the word has this signification, and yet it occurs many hundred times. Neither do I think that the Apostle would attempt to prove the lawfulness of a marriage *by the legitimacy of the children*, which would be to reason in a circle; besides, he speaks of a privilege which such children *now* enjoy, and which could not be said of them before. The legitimacy of the children could not be affected by the religious principles of either parent, if the marriage had been legally solemnised according to the civil law of the state. The separation of the parents could not bastardize the children, even if they had been divorced for a lawful cause. Nothing but the existence of a previous marriage, or other legal impediment, could produce such an effect; and the Apostle had just declared that nothing but adultery could authorize a divorce.

Dr Macknight paraphrases the words thus, "otherwise certainly your children would be neglected by you as unclean; whereas indeed they are clean; they are the objects of your affection and care." And he supposes that the term *αἱρεῖς* is used in the sense which it bears when applied to meats, as clean, or fit for use, 1 Tim. iv. 5. But to say that a child is *fit for use*, is surely a very harsh metaphor to signify that it is the object of affection to its parents; nor does this learned writer produce a single instance where the word is evidently used in the sense here ascribed to it.

Neither can it be supposed that the Apostle means by this expression, that the children of such marriages are *morally pure*, on account of the parents' faith; for in this sense all are equally, by nature, born in sin, and children of wrath; and we are assured that the faith of one will not secure the salvation of another who is destitute of faith, Ezek. xviii. 10—13. Besides, the *unbeliever* is said to be sanctified, which precludes the idea of spiritual holiness.

I must therefore subscribe to the opinion of those who main-

tain that the Apostle refers to the church privileges enjoyed by the children of such marriages. The usual meaning of the word *ayios* is, *set apart from a common to a sacred use*. Thus Schleusner renders it, *qui est a communi et promiscuo usu segregatus, et ad peculiare usus consecratus. Qui Deo consecratur et dicatur, cultui ejus usuique sacro destinatus. Qui est Christianorum cœtui annumerandus*. "That which is separated from a common and promiscuous use, and consecrated to peculiar uses. That which is consecrated and dedicated to God, being appropriated to his worship, and to a sacred purpose. He who is numbered in the congregation of christians." It is applied to the temple and instruments of service under the law: It is also applied to those victims that were fit to be offered to God; and in the New Testament it is the general term applied to the disciples of Christ. The people of Israel are called a holy nation, and a kingdom of priests, as being in covenant with God, (Exod. xix. 5. 6. Deut. vii. 6.) Of *this sanctity* circumcision was unquestionably the outward sign. Hence the words uncircumcised and unclean are used interchangeably, Isa. liii. 1. "There shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." "No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel." (Ezek. xlv. 9. See also Exod. vi. 12. compared with Isa. vi. 5. Acts x. 28. xi. 3.) Both the parents and the children of the Israelites are called "the holy seed," Ezra ix. 2. Now the holiness of the Jewish children clearly refers to their being circumcised; by this rite they were distinguished from the children of heathens, and were dedicated to the service of God. This was also the case with those proselytes who were admitted members of the Jewish church; they and "all their males" were circumcised, and allowed to eat the passover. (Exod. xii. 48.) In the same manner, the children of believers under the Gospel were considered as *fit to be presented to God*, and were recognised as forming a part of the christian community; thus they were distinguished from the children of idolaters. Hence it is concluded, that these children are denominated *holy*, on account of their having been admitted to the ordinance of baptism. It appears that this rite was administered to believers and their households. (Acts xvi. 15, 33.) And it would seem that those children were also included, who had only one believing parent, when the father or mother became responsible for their religious instruction;—

this was a privilege which they now enjoyed under the Gospel. Such appears to have been the case with Timothy, of whom it is said, "he was the son of a certain woman who was a Jewess and believed, but his father was a Greek," (Acts xvi. 1.) and his pious mother Eunice was careful to train him up in the knowledge of the scriptures from his childhood. The words in question are thus explained by Schleusner, *jam vero habentur membra ecclesie Christianae*. "But now they are reckoned members of the christian church." It may be objected that we have the same authority for supposing that the unbelieving husband or wife had been baptized, according to this interpretation: But no adult person was admitted to this ordinance till he had professed his faith. The same critic renders the former clause, *maritus enim non-christianus annumerandus est quodammodo Christianis ob uxorem Christianam*. "For the unbelieving husband is reckoned in some sense among christians, on account of his christian wife." The meaning of the passage seems therefore to be, "the unbelieving husband is so far sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband, that their children are admitted to those privileges which have been always enjoyed by the offspring of God's people. Were it otherwise, they would be in the same situation as the children of heathens; but now they have been dedicated to God."

This consideration was well fitted to reconcile the minds of christian parents to remain with their unbelieving partners; it was a token that salvation was come to their house. It reminded them of the liberal spirit of the Gospel, and encouraged them to hope (as the Apostle afterwards observes ver. 16.) that in due time God would shew mercy even to the unbeliever, that they might rejoice in Him, with *all their house*. On this passage Mr Scott observes, "I cannot but conclude, after long attention to the subject, that the baptism of the infant offspring of christians, is here evidently referred to as at that time customary in the churches; and that the Corinthians knew that this was not objected to, when only one parent was a christian." In short, were a mother especially, to desert her husband on account of his being an idolater, he would in all probability insist on keeping the children under his own care, and this would put it out of her power to instruct them, agreeably to the obligation she had come under on their account; as, on the other hand, it is not likely that any children would be offered for baptism without the permission of the unbelieving parent. Cases similar to this frequently occur.

The Apostle now supposes another case, that the unbelieving party might be so much displeased with the conversion of the other, as to withdraw on that account, notwithstanding every endeavour to prevent it. 15. "But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart (χωρίζεσθαι) the brother or the sister is not in bondage (οὐ δαδουλωται) in such cases (or with such persons, ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις.) But God hath called us to peace (ἐν εἰρήνῃ)." This verse has also given rise to much discussion. The difficulty arises from the words, "is not in bondage." Some paraphrase them, "is not obliged to continue to live with the unbeliever." But by the supposition, the unbeliever already refused to live with the converted party, so that this expresses nothing more than what was before implied. It is accordingly rendered by others, "is not in bonds of matrimony with such persons;" or, according to Schleusner, "is not obliged by *these laws*." Dr M'Knight's note on the passage is as follows: "The Apostle had declared, verse 11. that the married party who maliciously deserted the other, was not at liberty to marry during the other's life. Here he declares, that the party who was willing to continue the marriage, but who was deserted notwithstanding a reconciliation had been attempted, was at liberty to marry. And his decision is just; because there is no reason why the innocent party, through the fault of the guilty party, should be exposed to the danger of committing adultery." The same view is taken in the Confession of Faith, (chap. 24.) "Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage, yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage," &c. Accordingly the law of Scotland allows of divorce, in case of wilful and irreclaimable desertion. This view of the passage, however, is warmly opposed by the late Dr Dwight (Theol. Ser. 121.) in a discourse delivered by him, with reference to a projected law of the United States. He argues that no relief can be given to the deserted party in any case; and that the Apostle had already decided this, ver. 11. But the previous interpretation has been the general sense of enlightened statesmen, as well as theologians, in our own country, and it has been found necessary to act upon it in the case of persons in heathen lands, who have been converted to Christianity in modern times

by the labours of missionaries. Many instances have occurred in which the converted party has been totally abandoned, and where no means of reconciliation could be employed. And it has been thought necessary to allow such persons to marry a second time, to prevent the serious consequences that might ensue from obliging them to remain unmarried. (*See Brown's History of Missions*, vol. 1. p. 366.) In the 11th verse the Apostle speaks of the *deserting* party; here he refers to the party wilfully *deserted*.

None will deny, however, that every effort should be used to bring about a reconciliation, and that divorces of this kind should not be hastily granted. This is what the Apostle observes, "*for God hath called us to peace*;" it is the duty of Christians to study the things that would make for peace, both as members of churches and of families; and surely every one who regards the honour of the Gospel, will do every thing in his power to avert such a deplorable calamity, as a final separation from one he has vowed to live with until death.

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is Christianity *alone* which gives to the female sex their proper station in society, and preserves the institution of marriage in its primitive sanctity and honour.

2. We cannot but admire the humanity and wisdom of those rules which the Apostle here lays down. He will not *discourage* any from entering into the marriage state. He *honours* those who, for the glory of God, prefer leading a single life. He advises those who are unequally yoked with unbelievers, to fulfil the duties of their station, from a regard to the honour of Christianity, and to the spiritual welfare of their children.

3. It is evidently implied that "marriage is honourable to all" orders of men; and when we consider the deplorable consequences that have resulted from the operation of the antichristian law "*forbidding to marry*," we cannot but abhor that policy which would violate the order of nature, and the word of God, by declaring that it is better to be inflamed with unchaste desires than to enter into lawful marriage. It has been observed, that "this chapter contains in it more in favour of a single life than all the rest of the Scripture taken together" (*Scott*); yet how very guarded is the language of the Apostle, and how far is he from

ascribing that superior degree of sanctity and honour, which in after ages was superstitiously attributed, to the state of virginity ! How anxious does he appear not to involve those in vows of celibacy who might be exposed to temptations on that account, and how improper is it in men to make restrictions, where the Spirit of God has left every one free to act as he shall judge to be most for his own advantage !

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 16—24.

ON THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS FULFILLING THEIR RELATIVE OBLIGATIONS.

THE Apostle, in order to reconcile the minds of those to their situation, who, *before their conversion*, had been married to unbelievers, and to induce them to remain faithful to their engagements, had referred to the command of Christ on this subject ; he had also alluded to the religious privileges enjoyed by the children of such marriages. He now mentions another circumstance for their encouragement, namely, the possibility of their being honoured to bring their unconverted partners to the knowledge of the truth. 16. “For how knowest thou, (*τι οἶδας*) O wife, whether (*α*) thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” The same argument is adduced by the apostle Peter, (1 Epis. iii. 1, 2.) “Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives, beholding your chaste deportment (*αἰσχροπρεπείᾳ*) coupled with fear.” Such an event as this was not to be despaired of. The same divine grace which had brought the one party out of darkness into light, could make the other an heir of salvation. And those who were so nearly related had the greatest advantages and the most favourable opportunities for promoting each others spiritual welfare. The unbelieving husband, for instance, might refuse to attend on the public preaching of the Gospel ; but by this means it would be brought to his door. He might not be disposed to listen to a stranger, but

would more readily hear the exhortations of one whom he loved ; and even if the converted wife should have no encouragement or liberty to speak, she could, by her cheerful performance of duty, her modest, humble, and consistent behaviour, exhibit before him the happy influence of the truth, and thus " win " his soul " without the word." To *this* should be united fervent and persevering prayer. Many have thus proved a blessing to their families ; and persons in these circumstances, would do well to consider whether they are sufficiently diligent in the use of these means, or whether the unbelief of their partners in life may not be confirmed by their inconsistent and disobliging conduct. Of course, this is not to be understood as *sanctioning* marriage with unbelievers, but refers to connections of this kind *already formed*. Many have been miserably disappointed in making the hazardous experiment of marrying ungodly persons, in the view of attempting their conversion ; and not a few have been induced to apostatize from the faith, in consequence of such marriages.

The Apostle having thus mentioned the duties of married persons, here makes a digression, to consider the duty of Christians with respect to *other relations of life*. It seems to have been an opinion held by some, that on embracing the Gospel, all former connections were virtually dissolved, and the converted person was set free from the obligations of social life. Such a doctrine as this would have introduced great confusion into society, and materially injured the credit and success of Christianity. Instead of weakening or relaxing moral and civil obligations, it greatly strengthens them. It teaches us that *God has appointed to every one his lot*, and fixed the bounds of our habitation, and that we ought to glorify him in whatever circumstances we may be placed. With respect to external condition, or civil compacts, Christianity makes no alteration, unless in the case of those which are positively unlawful. And this rule the Apostle invariably *laid down in all the churches* which he had planted ; these were reduced, as we have before observed, as nearly as possible to one model, both as to doctrine, discipline and government. Such is the sentiment expressed in the 17th verse, " But if not, (*ὡ μὴ*) (that is, though the unbelieving party should not be converted,) yet, as God hath distributed (*μερίσας*) to every one, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and thus I ordain in all the churches, (*ὅτι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις*).

With regard to *religious profession*, it frequently happened that a descendant of Abraham, living among the Gentiles, was converted, and introduced into the Christian church. In this case, he was apt to conceal the circumstance of his having been circumcised, from motives of policy, as in Judea he would have been disposed to glory in this distinction. Referring to these individuals, the Apostle asks, 18. "Has any one been called, being circumcised? Let him not be uncircumcised, (*μη περιπασθε*). So in the case of converted Gentiles, the Apostle would not allow them to submit to the rite of circumcision, as if it were necessary to salvation, or as if the Mosaic law were still in force; nor were they required to follow those rules, which were merely tolerated, out of respect to the prejudices of the Jewish brethren. "Is any one called in uncircumcision? (*in αργευστια*) let him not be circumcised." In fact this outward distinction was of no importance in itself, but only as a sign of an internal and spiritual change. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) In the same manner, he here observes, 19. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." This seems to have been a favourite sentiment with the Apostle. It is repeated elsewhere under various modifications of expression, (Gal. v. 6.; vi. 15. Phil. iii. 3. Rom. ii. 25.) The Judaizing teachers taught the necessity of circumcision, that they might boast of the number of their followers, avoid the offence of the cross, and perpetuate the observance of the Mosaic law. (Gal. vi. 12, 13.) On this account, the Apostle testified to every one that was circumcised *with this view*, that Christ would profit him nothing. The sentiment in this passage has often been abused, as if it were of no consequence what a man believed, or what religion he professed, providing his moral conduct be correct. Now, this would prove the futility of the attempts made by the Apostle himself to bring men to the faith of the Gospel, or to submit to the ordinances of Christ. Yet both of these points he spent his life in labouring to secure. The truth is, faith in the doctrines of the Gospel is as much a command of God, as the practice of the moral virtues. Hence our Lord says, "This is the command or work of God, that ye believe in him whom he

hath sent." (John vi. 29. So also 1 John iii. 23.) Even the *positive institutions* of the Gospel are binding, as a part of the commandments of God. (chap. xi. 24.) They are only viewed as nothing, when they are trusted to as the ground of acceptance with God, or when the outward *form* of religion is substituted for its *power*. In short, the sentiment of the text is, that it is a matter of little or no consequence what religion any one may have formerly professed, if he now believes the Gospel, and lives under its influence.

With regard to *worldly callings*, or civil occupations, the Apostle enforces the same rule. 20. "Let every one continue in the same calling in which he was called." Some might think it unlawful to follow the same profession which they had pursued in their heathen state. But in general it would be for their advantage to continue in it, unless it were connected with the maintenance of idolatry, sorcery or magic, or other customs plainly immoral. Thus we find that John, the Baptist gave directions for the conduct of publicans and soldiers, (Luke iii. 13, 14.) which he would hardly have done, had these employments been positively unlawful. The converts would, besides, be most able to gain a livelihood in their own profession. A changeable disposition, even with respect to secular occupations, argues a habit of indolence, or a want of prudence. Some might even abandon their profession, under pretence of conscience, *in order to be maintained in idleness by the alms of the church*. Such seems to have been the case with the persons mentioned by the Apostle, 2 Thess. iii. 11. "We hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies." This rule, of course, does not apply to those who have given up their worldly occupations to devote themselves to the work of the ministry. The apostles and primitive teachers in general were in this situation.

The Apostle next alludes to the case of converted slaves. Some might be ready to make an exception in *their favour*. They might argue that a state of slavery is inconsistent with the dignity of the christian character.—Persons in this situation would be deprived of many religious privileges and opportunities, and they might be exposed to the temptation of idolatry in heathen families. Still, however, it was the duty of converted slaves to remain in such a situation, if Providence had placed them in it; and rules are accordingly laid down for their direction, in different places of the

New Testament. (Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7. Col. iii. 22—25. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Titus ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18—21.) Therefore the Apostle observes, 21. "Wert thou called being a slave (δουλος)? Be not concerned on that account," (μη ενιμιλησθαι). If, indeed, any opportunity were presented of regaining their liberty, in a *lawful manner*, it would be their duty thankfully to avail themselves of it, as freeing them from many difficulties in the way of their religious profession. "If thou canst be free, rather use (χρησιν) thy freedom:" As if he had said, "if any of thy wealthy brethren will come forward to afford thee the means of obtaining thy liberty, do not hesitate to use it." This was a delicate hint to persons in affluent circumstances, to exert themselves for the relief of their poor brethren. Accordingly, we find that large sums of money were contributed by the primitive christians, in order to ransom converted slaves.

To reconcile these poor people to their situation, the Apostle reminds them of their *spiritual emancipation*. 22. "He that is called when a slave, is the freedman of the Lord," (απελευθερος, non liber natus, sed manumissus.) They were made free by the Gospel from the yoke of Satan, from the bondage of sin, and the sentence of the divine law, according to the declaration of our Saviour, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 31, 32.) Or, as a christian poet beautifully expresses it,—

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes confed'rate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
—— The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind *him* is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells."

COWPER.

Such a freedom as this is a far greater gift than that of civil liberty, the want of which should give them comparatively little

concern. In this sense they were more ennobled than their heathen masters. "In the same manner he who is called, being a *free man* (ἐλευθερος), is the servant of Christ." Thus the apostle James says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low." (chap. i. 9, 10.) The converted freeman is brought under the yoke of Christ, in whose presence the distinctions of rank should be laid aside, and in whom there is neither bond nor free. He is not at liberty to live as he pleases, for he is under law to Christ; he has a Master in heaven, to whom he must give account, and who is no respecter of persons. But as a general rule, it was not advisable for christians to continue in a state of slavery. They were redeemed with an infinite ransom, even the precious blood of Christ, and should study to devote themselves entirely to him. This they could not so easily do in a state of slavery. "Ye are bought with a price, (chap. vi. 20.) be not ye the slaves of men." (ver. 23.) This expression may also mean, that a christian ought not to be so enslaved to the will of a fellow-creature, as to violate the obligations which he owes to Him who redeemed him. The Apostle would therefore again repeat, 24. "Let every one remain in the same situation in which he hath been called, *with God*, (παρετα Θεῷ)." By this last expression he reminds the christian slave, that he had the gracious presence of God, even in his humble lot. It was the place which infinite wisdom had assigned to him, and he might glorify his heavenly Master by the diligent and faithful performance of his duty, no less than if he occupied a higher sphere. He might thus rely on his blessing, and look to him for strength and direction, rejoicing that "whatsoever good any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." The expression may also intimate, that he ought to conduct himself at all times *as in the presence of God*, shewing all good fidelity, serving, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but with singleness of heart as unto Him.

The Apostle does not here enter on the abstract question respecting the *lawfulness of slavery*, which might have involved him in the discussion of political rights. The first preachers of the Gospel recognized the existing authorities, and recommended the observance of every ordinance of man, without deciding on the comparative merits of the various forms of civil government. They left it to the gradual operation of christian princi-

ple to ameliorate the political condition of mankind. But it is evident that the general complexion of the Apostle's argument is unfavourable to a state of slavery. This is implied in verses 21, 23. He went as far, indeed, as he could, in the existing situation of the church. Such was the impression of the first christians, who, as already observed, made great exertions for the ransom of slaves. All men as sprung from one blood, are possessed of equal natural rights, and were therefore originally free. The reverses of war reduced some to the condition of slavery. The inability of others to pay their debts, induced them to sell to their creditors their own children. The same necessity led them to dispose of their own liberty; and the children born of such parents were considered the property of their masters. But it is justly observed by *Montesquieu*, that the fortune of war gives no man a right to enslave another, but only to deprive him of the power of injuring him; neither can a free man sell himself, for no equivalent can be given for such a price; nor has he a right to sell his unborn offspring, for the same reason, (*Spirit of Laws*, book 15. c. 1.) No difference of colour can give one man a right to reduce another to slavery. The negro is possessed of the same mental powers as other men. He is capable of the same improvement. He is equally interested in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is of no use to say that the slave is kindly treated, or well fed. You may encrease the animal comforts of an individual by keeping him in prison, but this gives you no right to deprive him of his liberty. Servitude was tolerated under the Mosaic dispensation; but its hardships were mitigated by many humane regulations; and Hebrew slaves recovered their liberty in the year of release. It cannot be denied that the supply of slaves is kept up by interminable wars among the tribes of Africa, and that these quarrels are fomented by the arts of Europeans. The greater number are in fact *stolen*, and receive no kind of recompense for their loss of freedom: Now *man-stealing* is numbered among the greatest crimes, even by the law of Moses, (Exod. xxi. 16.) "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, shall surely be put to death." See also 1 Tim. i. 10. Neither will any one venture to say that the horrors of the middle passage are in accordance with the spirit of Christianity. There are other evils in the system of slavery which have called down the animadversion of the legislature, and which it is to be hoped, will soon

be *practically* abolished ; the practice of separating members of the same family from each other ; the use of the whip as an instrument of punishment ; the holding of Sunday markets ; and, above all, throwing obstacles in the way of the religious instruction of slaves. This was a refinement of cruelty which seems to have been unknown to heathen masters ; for no complaints occur on this head in the New Testament : and indeed the opposition that has been made to the labours of peaceful missionaries for the conversion of slaves in the West Indies, proves that the doctrine of the Apostles, which is taught by them, is viewed with a jealous eye. (*See an admirable Sermon on this subject by the Rev. Richard Watson, secretary to the Methodist Conference, on 1 Pet. ii. 17.*)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Is our lot appointed by the Lord ? Let us be satisfied with our situation. A change in outward circumstances, is not always an improvement.

2. How glorious the liberty of the children of God ! The Gospel imparts a freedom which not only mitigates the sufferings of the lowest condition, but renders the possession of civil liberty, (which, as Dr Doddridge observes, is esteemed the first of earthly blessings,) comparatively insignificant. This is a liberty

“ unsung
By poets, and by senators unprais’d ;
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confed’rate, take away !”

COWPER.

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 25—40.

OF VIRGINS.

THE Apostle had digressed from his main subject, which treats of the expediency of marriage, in order to point out the duty of christians as to other relations of life. He now *reverts* to the

principal topic of this discourse, with a special reference to the case of those who had not yet entered into the marriage state. 25. "But concerning virgins (*περὶ τῶν παρθένων*) I have not a commandment of the Lord." The word *παρθένος*, *virgin*, is applied both to men and women, though much more frequently to the latter. Thus it is said of the redeemed company, mentioned Rev. xiv. 4. "they are virgins," where, from the context, it evidently means *men*, (*παρθένων*.) Respecting this class, the Apostle observes, *he had no commandment*; that is, *our Lord* himself had left no express injunction on the subject, nor was any explicit law now revealed to the Apostle, which would bind the disciples of Christ either to enter into marriage, as among the Jews, or to abstain from it, as among the philosophical ascetics; "but he would give his judgment (*γινώσκω*, decision) as one who had obtained mercy of the Lord, (*ἐλεημένος*, who had been pitied) to be faithful." He had been entrusted with a stewardship in the house of God; and by this distinguished instance of sovereign *mercy* towards one who had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, (1 Tim. i. 16.) he considered himself laid under the strongest obligations to act *faithfully* in the service of his Lord. As a *matter of expediency*, therefore, he considered it best to abstain from marriage, while the church was exposed to persecution and danger. 26. "I think then (*οὕτως οὖν*) this is good, on account of the present distress (*ἐν τῇ νῦν ἀνάγκῃ*, the pressing necessity); that it is good for a man so to be;" that is, for one who is unmarried to remain so. By forming a connection of this kind *at that time*, a christian might be laid under strong temptation to conceal or renounce his faith, in order to avoid the hazard of the legal penalties enacted against the new religion. He might be liable, if convicted, to banishment, confiscation of goods, imprisonment, torture or death, all of which were inflicted on the persecuted christians, and any of which would bring heavy distress on his family. Thus, his tenderness of conscience would be called to maintain a severe struggle with his natural affection, and might be the occasion of much pain to those who depended on him for protection and support. As a *married man*, he would also be less at liberty to undertake any service in the church requiring self-denial, money, time, or change of residence. Of course, the Apostle does not mean that a single life is *at all times* to be preferred, or that it is a more holy and honourable state than that of marriage, as some were disposed to maintain. Nor

would he give any countenance to the doctrine of those who would dissolve the marriage union for trivial causes, or under pretence of a change of religion; those who were already married, or who had sought the affections of any individual, were bound to fulfil their engagements with honour. Therefore, he adds, 27. "Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed," (*λευσιν*; a release) On the other hand, such as were entirely *free* from such engagements, would find it their interest to continue so, if they desired to devote themselves more particularly to the service of Christ; as they would be more free from secular cares, and would be under fewer temptations to apostatize: To them he would say, "Art thou loosed from a wife? do not seek a wife." At the same time, if those who were unmarried considered that it would be more for their spiritual advantage and temporal comfort to change their condition, they were not to be *blamed* on that account, as if they had violated any of the laws of Christ, though they might prepare for a greater measure of *temporal distress*. 28. "But yet, if thou marriest, thou hast not sinned, and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned, but such shall have trouble in the flesh." They would find it no easy matter, in those times of persecution, to provide for a family; or they might be cut off by martyrdom in the vigour of life, and leave their helpless children to the care of strangers. And *at all times* the married pair must look for trouble in the flesh. Every new relation multiplies the vulnerable points of attack in the heart of an affectionate person. The anxiety and care inseparable from the rearing of young children are *such*, that nothing but the love of a parent could reconcile the mind to so arduous a duty. After all, his heart is often pierced with anguish by their early death, and no less by their undutiful behaviour or vicious habits. The Apostle, however, was unwilling to say more on this tender point, lest he should discourage those who were already married, or who might see it to be their duty to enter into that state; or lest he should lay a snare in the way of such as were young and inexperienced; and therefore he waives the subject, by saying, "But I spare you."

29—31. It was proper, however, that in forming this connection, as well as in all the concerns of the present life, they should keep in view the *shortness of time*, and the uncertainty of all worldly enjoyments. "Now this I say, brethren, that the time is short," (*συνελεγεσθαι*, contracted or wound up;) with some of them, a

great part of this limited space was already gone, and the period that remained could not be of long duration to *any*. Life is compared to a hands-breadth or a span—to the course of a ship—to the rapidity of a post—to a fleeting shadow—to the fading grass. "For what is your life," says the apostle James, "it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," (chap. iv. 14.) "The conclusion therefore is, (το λοιπον εστι) that those who have wives should be as though they had none;" they should guard against *inordinate affection*, ever remembering that sooner or later the most tender tie must be broken; and while they gratefully acknowledge the goodness of Providence, they must be prepared to part with every comfort at his call. So Ezekiel, chap. xxiv. 16. In the same manner "those who weep should be as those who weep not;" (ὡς μη κλαιοντες) no one should indulge in excessive *grief* for the loss of any temporal blessing; mortality and vanity are inscribed upon them all; and they are under the direction, and at the disposal, of Him who makes all things work together for good to them that love him: especially they ought not to sorrow for departed *saints* as *others* who have no hope, for in a little time there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. On the other hand, "they who rejoice should be as though they rejoiced not." They ought not to be unduly elated with the acquisition of any temporal good, for the riches, honours, and friendships of this world are *fleeting* and *perishable*; and the christian's motto, in seasons of prosperity, should be, "Rejoice with trembling." So *they who buy* (αγοραζοντες) should be as though they possessed not, (μη κατειχοντες, as though they held not.) They are only tenants of their houses, lands, and other possessions; and they must not imitate the example of the men of the world, whose "inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations;" (Ps. xlix. 11.) they must soon quit their pleasant abode, at the will of the Sovereign Proprietor, "and the place that now knows them, shall know them no more." In short, in whatever way the things of this world are acquired or disposed of, they should be moderately *enjoyed* (χρημενοι) and not wantonly *abused* (καταχρημενοι). "For the fashion (σχημα) of this world passeth away," (παρευγι). The whole *scheme* of human affairs, with all the busy pursuits and engrossing interests of time, disappears like the shadows of the evening, or the waves that ripple

to the shore. They resemble the shifting scenes of a theatre, or may be compared to a glittering pageant got up for a particular occasion, and gradually receding from the sight. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it," (Isa. xl. 7.) Thus "the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever," (1 John ii. 17.) A practical regard to the admirable rule here laid down, constitutes the *great wisdom of life*. It will preserve us from being unduly elated with prosperity, or depressed by adversity. It will keep the mind in peace, and amidst all the vicissitudes of time we shall be tranquil and resigned. This is beautifully expressed in the following lines:

"As some tall rock that lifts its awful form,
Swell from the vale, and mid-way leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

GOLDSMITH.

32, 33. The Apostle, in all that he had said, wished to consult the *spiritual welfare* of his brethren. "I would have you," he observes, "without anxious care, (*ἀνέμενον*);" not that he inculcates a reckless and improvident spirit, but he would wish them to dismiss that painful solicitude about present objects which implies a distrust of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. This is frequently deprecated by our Saviour; "Take no anxious thought (*μη μεριμνήτε*) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?" (Matt. vi. 25--34.) In general it would be found, that the unmarried christian has superior advantages for pursuing a religious course, because his affections and thoughts are less divided by a multiplicity of interfering objects; he has only his personal wants to attend to; whereas the married christian is bound to consult the inclinations and comfort of his wife, which must of necessity engross a considerable share of attention. "He that is unmarried is anxiously concerned (*μεριμνᾷ*) about the things of the Lord, how he shall please the Lord; but he who has married (*γαμίσθης*) is concerned

about the things of the world, how he shall please his wife." The same thing may be said of the *female sex*. "The wife and the virgin differ," (*μιμνῆσται*, are divided,) in the same manner. "She that is *unmarried* careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but she that is *married* careth for the things of the world, how she shall please her husband." Here the Apostle supposes that unmarried believers will devote the greater leisure which they enjoy, to the service of God, and to the good of their fellow-creatures; that, she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, as Anna the prophetess, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day (1 Tim. v. 5.); and that christian virgins will follow the example of Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word; or of Dorcas, who "was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did," and who, instead of spending her time in idle visiting, or in adorning her person, employed her hands in making coats and garments for the poor. (Acts ix. 36, 39.) On the other hand, "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth." Indeed it cannot be denied that, in some instances, marriage has produced an obvious change on the character of christian females. They appear to have "cast off their first love;" and their anxiety about the things of the world has degenerated into a selfish and covetous spirit. The same is true of the other sex. But the grace of God will be made sufficient to them that ask it, in every situation.

"This however," says the Apostle, "I speak for your advantage, (*συμφέρει*) not that I may cast a snare (*βροχήν*) upon you; but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction: "---what he designed was, to lead them to that which is becoming in itself (*ευσχημον*), and which would leave them most at liberty to wait (*υπεροσίδειν*) on the Lord without distraction, (*απρισπαστώς*), or, as the word signifies, "without having their thoughts drawn in opposite directions."

The meaning of the 36th verse is obscure, and has occasioned a good deal of perplexity to commentators. "But if any one thinks he acts unbecomingly (*ασχημονειν*) towards his own virgin, (*επι την παρθενον αυτου*), if she be beyond the flower of her age, (*υπερανθος*, above the years of puberty) and ought thus to be (*ουτως οφειλει γινεσθαι*) namely, to be married, let him do what he pleases (*ο θελει*); he does not sin (*ουχ' αμαρτανει*), let them marry," that is, let *such* virgins marry, (*γαμιτωσαν*). Some have imagined that the

Apostle refers to those persons who have indulged in illicit intercourse before marriage; but surely he would not say of such, *they have not sinned*. According to others, the word *παρθενος* refers to the state of virginity; as if the Apostle had said, "if any man thinks he acts unseemly, by continuing in a *single state*, let him marry; but the original will not bear this construction. The word *παρθενια* signifies *virginity*. It might rather seem that reference is made to a previous contract, or promise of marriage given to a virgin, which the contracting party is in such cases bound in honour and duty to perform. But the general opinion is, that the Apostle alludes to the case of a *parent*, or guardian having a virgin under his care. If he was aware that she had formed some attachment while under his roof, it was his duty to consult her happiness, by freely allowing her to marry; and then the word *γαμιστωσαι* may be rendered, "let such parents give their virgin daughters in marriage." This view is confirmed, if we consider that several ancient manuscripts read *γαμιστω*, which properly signifies "let him give her in marriage!" (See Greisbach and Parkhurst.) Some explain the words, *ο θελων*, of the *virgin*, and read what *she will*, and the original equally bears this construction. This interpretation will appear the more just, by considering what is added in the next verse, 37. "But he that standeth settled or stedfast (*ιθραιος*) in his heart, not having necessity (*μη εχων αναγκην*), but has power (*εξουσιαν*) concerning his own will, and has determined this (*τουτο κεραειν*) in his heart, to keep his own virgin (*του ταρειν την αυτου παρθενον*), does well." If the parent knew of no such engagement which laid him under any necessity to dispose of his daughter, and judged it better for the welfare of his child, in those unsettled times, to keep her in his own house, though it should be attended with more care to himself, and might, humanly speaking, disappoint the hopes of his family, he was to be commended for his fortitude and superiority to the world. Such, according to some, was the resolution of Jephtha, when he devoted his virgin daughter and only child to the Lord, Judges xi. 39. The observations of the son of Sirach in the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, (chap. xlii. 9, 10.) are thought by some to throw great light on this passage. (See Parkhurst, Art. *υπερακμος*.) A parent, in short, was not to be condemned for seeking a suitable settlement for his daughter in marriage: But he would probably better consult her spiritual

good, if he continued to give her the benefit of his advice and protection at home. 38. "So then *he that giveth her (away) in marriage doeth well* (*ωγαμιζων*), but *he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*" Early marriages are often unhappy; so that a prudent father will not advise them. The only difficulty attending this view of the passage is, that it seems to give the parent a greater power over his daughter than is agreeable to modern manners; but this rather strengthens the argument, as there can be no doubt, that in ancient times the parental authority, in such matters, was more extensive than it is now, (Gen. xxiv. 51.) With regard to a *married woman*, the Apostle would again repeat, that she was bound to continue with her husband till the marriage was dissolved by his death: 39. "A wife is bound by law (*νομω*) as long as her husband liveth." (See also Rom. vii. 1, 2.) The Apostle, by the word law, may here refer to the *original institution* of marriage, which obliged a man to leave his father and mother, and to cleave to his wife, (Gen. ii. 24.) This rule has been so generally observed, that it may be called a law of nature. It has been recognized as a *law* by all civilized nations. It formed a part of the Jewish *code*, and was solemnly ratified and restored to its primitive vigour by our blessed Lord. "But if her husband be dead, she is free (*λευθερα*) to be married to whom she pleases, *only in the Lord*," (*μονον εν Κυριω*). Thus the christian widow is not to be restricted from entering into a second marriage, if she thinks proper. But there is one condition which is indispensable, namely, she must be careful to ascertain the *piety* of the individual who asks her in marriage. The expression "*in the Lord*," denotes, in Scripture language, a believer, or genuine christian. This might be proved from numerous passages of Scripture, Rom. xvi. 7, "Salute Andronicus and Junia, who also were in Christ before me," that is, were converted before the Apostle. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," (2 Cor. v. 17.) "They that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," (1 Cor. xv. 18.) "Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*," &c. (Rev. xiv. 13.) That a christian should marry *only in the Lord*, is the universal language of Scripture. This is essential to the enjoyment of the divine blessing, of personal comfort, and domestic happiness. It is intimately connected with the purity and prosperity of the church. In no other way, can family religion be maintained, or spiritual improvement promoted. Only *thus* can children be

trained up in the paths of holiness, and our duty to our relations be made consistent with our duty to God. Even on minor points of religion, agreement between married persons is desirable; but the absence of *true piety* cannot be compensated by worldly distinctions or personal accomplishments. (*See a valuable Treatise on this subject, entitled "A Guide to Domestic Happiness."*)

In conclusion, the Apostle observes, that the christian widow would do well to continue *as she was*, even though she might possess every advantage by changing her condition: 40. "But she is happier if she remain so, according to (*κατα*) my judgment; and I think (*δοκω*) that I also have the Spirit of God." Here he seems to speak as if he were uncertain whether or not he were inspired. But it has been observed, that the verb (*δοκω*) does not always imply *uncertainty*, but frequently denotes conviction or knowledge. (*See McKnight's Note.*) Thus, in Luke xvii. 9. our Lord, speaking of the servant doing nothing more than his duty, says, "does his master thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I *trou* not," (*ου δοκω*.) So exhorting the Jews to search the Scriptures, he says, "In them ye think (*δοκετε*) ye have eternal life," &c. (John v. 39.) where evidently, no doubt is implied. The Apostle had formerly declared, "he had the mind of Christ, and the Spirit of God," (chap. ii. 10—16.) Dr McKnight accordingly renders the words, "I am certain that even I have the Spirit of God."

REFLECTIONS.

1. Every part of the word of God ought to be read with reverence. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled," (Titus i. 15.)

2. How necessary that we should guard against every thing that would distract our minds, or divert our thoughts, while engaged in the service of God! How many vain imaginations and earthly cares defile our most holy duties, and how frequently is the language of prayer and of praise on our lips, while our heart is far from him! How suitable the language of David, "Unite my heart to fear thy name!"

3. Is life short and uncertain? Let us then keep our affections disengaged from things below, and fixed on the glories of the

heavenly state. Why should we complain of the hardships of our situation? The troubles of the present time are light and momentary, when compared with that rest which remains for the people of God. Let us have our loins girt about, and our lamps burning, that we may be ready to meet the Bridegroom at his coming. Let us avail ourselves of the peculiar advantages of ~~our~~ lot, to be more active and assiduous in his service. But how great the delusion of those who, like the fool in the parable, are ready to exult over their possessions, and to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!" This night their soul may be required of them; then whose shall those things be which they have provided? (Luke xii. 19, 20.) "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For ye ought to say, *If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that,*" (James iv. 13, 15.)

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

AGAINST EATING IDOL SACRIFICES.

THE Apostle now proceeds to answer another question that had been put to him *respecting the lawfulness of eating meats that had been offered in sacrifice to the heathen gods*. Of the victims used for this purpose, part was consumed on the altar, part was given to the priests, and the remaining part was returned to the offerer, who feasted on it with his friends. On particular occasions, great numbers of animals were slain, and what part of the flesh was not used, as above specified, was publicly sold in the markets.* There is a remarkable similarity, as to the principal rites

* Thus Pliny, in his Letter to Trajan, says, that owing to the rapid spread of Christianity there had been few purchasers for the sacrifices, "*veriusculus emptor inveniebatur.*"

of sacrifice, between the heathen customs and the Mosaic institutions,—a proof that this method of atonement was very general, and was originally of divine appointment, although, in the case of the Gentiles, it was entirely perverted from its first design. The feasts now alluded to, were sometimes celebrated in *private houses*; at other times in the *temples* of the gods; and the primitive christians would no doubt be frequently invited by their idolatrous friends, to join in their festivities. It became, therefore, a point of considerable difficulty, to know how to act in these circumstances. Some, who boasted of their superior knowledge and firmness, thought there could be no harm in complying with such invitations, because they knew that an idol was a mere *nonentity*, or at best a material image, representing some imaginary being, and incapable of doing good or evil; and such is the repeated testimony of Scripture, (Ps. cxv. 4. Isa. xlv. 10. Jer. x. 8, 9.) On this account they maintained, that they could lawfully partake of the sacrifice as *common food*, without paying any religious homage to the idol, to whom it had been offered. Others were of more limited views, and though they had embraced the Christian faith, and consequently believed in the true God, and the Saviour, they were not altogether free from a superstitious regard to the objects of their former worship, many of whom indeed had been remarkable men, who were deified on account of their wisdom or talents. Nor is this wonderful, when we consider the tendency of the human mind to idolatry; even in some parts of our own country, remains of this superstitious spirit are to be found. Now, the latter class of persons could not join in these idolatrous feasts, without feeling some veneration for the object of worship, and in so far, renouncing their allegiance to the only true God. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, to avoid every thing that might confirm them in their errors, or encourage them to trifle with conscience. Even though it were true, that the more enlightened could mingle in these entertainments without injury, they ought, from a regard to their weaker brethren, to give them no countenance by their presence.

1. These remarks will help us to understand the Apostle's reasoning in this chapter. He *admits* that *all had knowledge*; not only the apostles themselves, but every private christian, knew that the heathen deities had no real existence. Dr M'Knight observes, that this was the grand secret communicated to the initiated in

the heathen mysteries; but it may be doubted, after all that has been said on the subject by Warburton and others, whether the design of these mysteries was to communicate the knowledge of the unity of God. This, however, was made known by the Gospel; so that every private christian knew more of the Deity than the greatest philosophers of antiquity; but it did not become them to be vain of their acquirements, or to abuse their speculative knowledge to the injury of others. *Knowledge is nothing without love. The former puffeth up, the latter edifieth (1 Cor. 13: 8.)* Unsanctified knowledge has a tendency to elate the mind with a vain conceit of its own attainments. Intellectual superiority is not necessarily connected with moral excellence, as may be seen in the case of the fallen spirits, and of wicked men. It is often accompanied with a supercilious contempt for the weaknesses and prejudices of others. Charity or *love*, on the other hand, by which we are to understand the practical influence of the truth, as opposed to mere speculation, will lead a man to entertain humble views of himself, to aim at increasing discoveries of divine knowledge, and to consult the spiritual welfare or edification of his neighbour. It is less dazzling than speculative knowledge, but has more *solidity*. *Puffing up* is finely opposed to *building up*. True wisdom is always accompanied with meekness, so that it may be laid down as a general rule, that he who *boasts* of his knowledge is still lamentably ignorant of his own character. 2, "If any man thinks (*Jesus, is confident*—M'Knight) that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." It is said of Socrates, that when the Delphic oracle declared him to be the wisest of mankind, he concluded that this high character had been given to him, because he was more sensible than any man, of his own deficiency in knowledge. (*Rollin's Ancient History*, book 9. chap. 4. sect. 3.) It has been observed of natural science, that the more a man knows, the more he is sensible he has yet to learn. The most simple object, such as an animal, a tree, or a stone, is only partially known by its visible qualities;—on every side, our views are limited as to the *essences* of material things. This is still more the case with respect to our knowledge of the dispensations of God, both in providence and in grace. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! The grand evidence of spiritual knowledge, is love. Therefore the Apostle adds, 3. "But if any man love God,

the same (*ἐντες*) is known (*ἐγινωσκει*) by him." M'Knight gives a transitive sense to the verb, and reads, "is made to know by him," that is, he who loves God, is taught by him in a right manner, agreeably to other passages, where increasing light is promised to those who are obedient. Thus, (John vii. 17.) "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Others suppose that the antecedent to *ἐντες* is God; and then the passage is rendered, "He that loves God has the true knowledge of his character." But the word *ἐγινωσκει* may be translated *is approved of*, which is more natural than to give it a transitive sense. The demonstrative pronoun seems also to refer to *τις*, *any man*; and the Apostle's meaning will then be, "He that loves God is the object of his approbation, and the subject of his special care." So it is said (Ps. xxxiv. 15.) "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." It is true, that, according to this interpretation, the connection of the 3d verse with the preceding context is not so obvious. But such abrupt transitions are not unfrequent in the writings of Paul, nor is this general observation altogether foreign to his purpose, for it is evidently implied, that love to God should induce us to avoid every action that would cast a snare in the way of a brother. The whole passage, from the last clause of verse 1. to verse 4. is parenthetical, after which he resumes his main subject. Referring to the argument of those who attempted to justify the practice of joining in idolatrous feasts, on the ground that an idol has no real existence or independent government in the universe, he observes, "Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one." Here the unity of the Godhead is pointedly asserted, in opposition to every system of Polytheism. This our Saviour declares to be the first of all the commandments, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," (Mark xii. 29.) The simplicity of design displayed in the structure of the universe, clearly proves the existence of one Great First Cause, who, according to our conception of an infinitely perfect Being, must be eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable. Of this One Jehovah, it is said, "I am, and there is no God besides me." "He will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images." It is true, there were vast numbers who were dignified with this title in the heathen world: but Christianity

had shewn the absurdity and impiety of this system. 5, 6. "For though there be those who are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, (as there are gods many and lords many,) yet to us there is one God, the Father, from whom ($\epsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\upsilon$) are all things, and we in him ($\mu\epsilon\tau\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$) and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom ($\delta\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon$) are all things, and we by him ($\delta\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$)." The heathen mythology recognized a great multitude of gods and demons, who were supposed to exercise authority, either supreme or subordinate, over the universe: possessed of very different characters and dispositions. Some were called *cælicolæ*, or inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Others ruled over the elements of fire, light, and air. Apollo guided the chariot of the sun. Diana presided over the changes of the moon, while Eolus controuled the rapid winds. Neptune swayed the sceptre of the ocean, and every mountain, river, grove, and cavern, had its appropriate deity. Even the *infernal regions* were placed under the government of Pluto and his subordinate judges. The ancient Greeks are reckoned to have had 30,000 gods. The people of Israel are severely censured by the prophets for multiplying idols, whom they sometimes called Elohim, or gods, (Exod. xxxii. 4.) and sometimes *Baalim*, or lords, (Hos. ii. 17.) Jeremiah complains, "according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah," (chap. ii. 28.) The Roman satirist ridicules the superstition of the Egyptians, who worshipped the crocodile, the ibis, fishes, dogs, and onions. (*Juvenal, Sat. 15. 1—10.*) The modern Hindoos acknowledge many myriads of deities; and the imagination is soon lost in the endless mazes of their fabulous mythology.*

Christians, on the other hand, acknowledge but one God, the Father—the First Cause, and Last End of all things, "of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Here the Father is called God, as sustaining the majesty of the Godhead; but almost the same terms are employed with respect to the Son. *He* is declared to be the Creator and Preserver of all things. So it is said, John i. 3. "All things were made by him, ($\delta\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$) and without him nothing was made that was made." In the same manner, in the Epistle to the Colossians, it is said, (chap. i. 16.) "for by him ($\mu\epsilon\tau\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$) all things were created ($\κ\epsilon\tau\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$) both in the heavens

* Angels and magistrates are sometimes called *gods*, in an inferior sense. (Ps. xcvi. 7. John x. 34, 35.)

and upon the earth, whether they be visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created (*ἐκ τούτου*) by him and for him (*δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ*)." The same truth is asserted, Heb. i. 2, 3. "By whom (*δι' οὗ*) also he made the worlds (*τοὺς αἰῶνες*);" and what these worlds are, is explained verse 10, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands." To suppose, therefore, as the Socinians do, that all that is meant by such passages is, that all parts of the new creation, or christian economy, were arranged by the Saviour, is a miserable subterfuge, invented to serve a purpose. It is impossible to express the proper creation of the universe in plainer language. The expressions are the same as are employed to signify the formation of the heavens and the earth, out of nothing, by the word of God; and we have no other way of proving from Scripture, that the world was created at all. Nor is the Arian hypothesis better founded, that God created all things by Jesus Christ as an *instrumental cause*. This they attempt to establish by a reference to the meaning of the Greek prepositions here used, (*ἐκ* and *δι'*). The former, they say, expresses proper causation, and is accordingly applied to the Father; the latter *mediate agency*, and is therefore applied to the Saviour. But this pretence will not avail, for the preposition *δι'* is used where unquestionably the Father is spoken of. Thus Rom. xi. 36. "For of him, and through him, (*δι' αὐτοῦ*) and to him are all things." So Heb. ii. 10. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom (*δι' αὐτοῦ*) are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering." Dr M'Knight describes the Father as the *original cause*, and the Lord Jesus as the *efficient cause* of all; but this distinction does not necessarily follow from the variation of phrase used by the Apostle. We cannot know the mode of operation among the divine persons; but no such distinction can be proved from such expressions, as would imply inferiority of nature on the part of the Son. Besides, it is evident from Col. i. 16, that our Lord is represented as the *last end* of all things; they were made not only *by* him, but *for* him (*ὡς αὐτῷ*), where the same words are used that are in this passage applied to the Father, and which consequently prove the essential deity of Christ. The creation of the heavens and of the earth is always described as the sole prerogative of Jehovah, by which he indis-

tinguished from all other gods, (Isa. xlv. 24.) ; but here all things are said to have been made by Jesus Christ—therefore he is God. The Apostle, however, declares that there is no other God, but one; unless therefore, we charge the Scriptures with inconsistency and contradiction, there must, in the unity of the Godhead, be a plurality of agents, which is what the Trinitarians affirm. This is intimated in the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is a plural noun. It is also plainly asserted in many parts both of the Old and New Testament. (Gen. iii. 22. Ps. ii. 12. ; xlv. 6, 7. ; cx. 1, 5. Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. John xv. 26. Rom. xv. 30.)

It may be proper to make a few remarks on the words “and we *in him*,” “and we *by him*.” Dr McKnight thus paraphrases them: There is one God the Father, “and we direct our worship *to him*,” and one Lord, even Jesus Christ, “and we *by him* worship the Father.” But we have already seen, that the Saviour is the object of christian worship as well as the Father, (chap. i. 2.) and the ellipsis here supposed, seems too harsh. The Apostle rather asserts the creation of all things *in general* by the Father, and then makes a particular reference to those whom he addresses, as *owing* their existence to him. The expression (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) may signify, that *in him* we live, and move, and have our being, (as in Acts xvii. 28.) or that he has created us *for himself*, to promote his own glory. Viewing Christ as Mediator, however, it is freely admitted, that all spiritual blessings are communicated *through him*; that we *by him* are constituted the children of God, and that *through him* we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Ephes. ii. 18.)

7. “But,” continues the Apostle, “there is not *in all* (*ἐν πάντι*), that knowledge; but some with conscience (*τῇ συνείδησει*) of the idol, until now, eat (it) as a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled (*μολυνταί*).” He had before said, “we all have knowledge;” but he might refer to those who thought themselves more enlightened than their brethren; accordingly he here qualifies the expression, by reminding these persons, that all christians were not equally well instructed in the truth before mentioned, that an idol is nothing in the world; for the words evidently mean: not that any in the church were ignorant of the one true God, and the one Mediator; accordingly he explains his meaning in the following words, above quoted. Some of the more recent converts, still retaining something of

their former prejudices, really believed that the idol had an actual existence, and exercised an inferior government; and with *this consciousness* they joined in the feast, with a design to render a species of *religious honour* to the object of worship; they ate the idol sacrifice *as such*, and their conscience, being only partially enlightened, was *polluted* by an act of idolatry.

The more advanced class pleaded, that they partook of the sacrifice as *common food*, and therefore the use of it could do them no real injury, neither would they be more pleasing to God, should they abstain from it. Their argument was, 8. "But meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better (*περισσεύωμεν*, do we abound), neither if we eat not, are we the worse, (*ὀλιγοψύχοι*, are we deficient);" that is, the use or the refusal of animal food can have no influence on our religious character. Some connect the negative particle with the first clause, and read, Neither if we *eat not* are we the better, nor if we *eat* are we the worse. (See Parkhurst. voc. *περισσεύω*); and this indeed gives a better sense, for the Corinthians could not suppose themselves the better for *eating* the idol sacrifice, but only maintained, that they would be no better for *abstaining* from it. In answer to this, the Apostle observes, that even if it could be proved that it was a thing indifferent in itself, it might prove an occasion of stumbling to others; and for that very reason, he disapproves of the practice. It is unworthy of a christian to gratify his appetite at the hazard of another's soul. "See," says he, ver. 9. "that this liberty (*ἐξουσία*, power or right) of yours do not become a stumbling-block to the weak," (*τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν*). By the *weak*, the Apostle means those who doubted the lawfulness of eating idol sacrifices. These might be emboldened to follow the example, in whom it would be sinful. This is explained in a passage somewhat parallel, (Rom. xiv.,) where the Apostle speaks of those weak persons who scrupled the use of animal food: "He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," ver. 23. In the same chapter he declares, that "all things are indeed pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence," (ver. 20.) that is, who thus throws a temptation in his brother's way. In like manner, he here argues: 10, 11. "If any one see thee having knowledge, sitting at meat (*κατακλιθεὶς*, lying down) in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him that is weak, be embolden-

ed (*εἰς ἀδοξάνθησεν*, be built up) to eat idol sacrifices? and the weak brother shall perish, by thy knowledge, for whom (*δι' ἡ*) Christ died?" A christian who had been but lately converted from heathenism, and who was not yet freed from his former superstitious prejudices respecting the existence of idols, seeing a fellow christian, who had shaken himself free from those prejudices, reclining at the table of idolatry, would be ready to infer, that surely there could be no danger in following the example of a person so distinguished by his knowledge; and thus, fortifying his conscience against every suspicion of its unlawfulness, he would be ensnared into an act of idolatry by the indiscreet use of his brother's superior knowledge. After having escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he would be again entangled therein, and overcome; thus his latter end would be worse than the beginning. Having begun to tamper with conscience, he would be emboldened to proceed further; and, renouncing the pure and spiritual religion of the Gospel, he would fall into a state of final apostacy. Could any thing be conceived more forcible than the Apostle's reasoning, to shew the impropriety of such occasional compliances? Instead of edifying his neighbour in love, the enlightened christian was strengthening him in his errors. Instead of acting towards him as a brother, he was endangering the salvation of his soul. Instead of complying with the design of the Saviour's death, he was doing all he could to counteract it; and for *what?* to gratify his fleshly appetite. Such expressions as "thy weak brother shall perish for whom Christ died," have been adduced as an argument for universal redemption. Similar phrases occur elsewhere, Rom. xiv. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." So the apostle Peter speaks of those heretics who "deny the Lord that bought them," 2 Epis. ii. 1. It is also frequently asserted in Scripture, that Christ died *for all*, and gave himself a ransom *for all*. (2 Cor. v. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 6.) Some maintain that these expressions are limited, and that the *elect* only are spoken of: But the words may be taken in their natural sense, and Christ may be said to have died for all, because his sacrifice is possessed of infinite efficacy, and because, on this ground, the invitations and promises of the Gospel, are addressed to all mankind; but when we consider the effectual *application* of the atonement, Christ is said to have laid down his life *for the sheep*, and to have

loved the church, and given himself for it. (John x. 15. Eph. v. 25.) Those who profess the faith, we are bound to consider as the objects of divine mercy, and to act towards them as the redeemed of the Lord. If, however, we embolden them to sin against their conscience, we are tempting them to deny the Lord who bought them. In respect of the divine purposes, our Saviour says, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. This is the Father's will who hath sent me, that of all whom he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise them up at the last day." John x. 28. ; vi. 39. If these passages seem contradictory, we are not solicitous about improving the words of the Holy Ghost. The language of Scripture is not modelled by the nice proportions of human systems ; but we cannot approve of the doctrine of those who would limit the unfettered invitations of the word of life.

The Apostle adduces another argument, which he was sure would weigh with all those who sincerely loved the Lord Jesus Christ. 12. "But when ye thus sin against the brethren, and smite (τυπώτε) their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." He considers even the weakest disciple as one with himself, and will resent the injuries done to his people, as virtually offered to his own person. As was observed on a former occasion, Paul could not have forgot the affecting language of the Saviour, when he called him to be an Apostle, "Why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 4, 5.) By this delicate turn, he intimates his conviction, that they really loved the Lord Jesus, and would not do any thing wilfully to displease him. The supreme dignity of Christ is further implied :—sinning against him is represented as an offence of the highest magnitude.

Finally, he brings forward his own determination, that rather than be the occasion of another committing sin, he would cheerfully deny himself every unnecessary indulgence, as long as he lived : 13. "Wherefore if meat scandalize my brother, or cause him to stumble (σκανδαλίζω), I will eat no flesh for ever (ὑποκαταλείω) lest I make my brother to fall." The same sentiment occurs, Rom. xv. 21. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." We cannot imagine a more magnanimous spirit, or a more striking display of brotherly love. Dr Mac-

knight's note on this passage is very important. "Those who impose on their weak and scrupulous brethren, things which they acknowledge to be indifferent, ought well to consider this passage of the word of God, together with what is written, Rom. xiv. For if the Apostle would eat no flesh, lest by so doing he might lead the weak to act contrary to their conscience, how will they answer to Christ, who, by heavy penalties, constrain others, contrary to their conscience, to comply with things which they themselves acknowledge to be indifferent?"—Those who plead for acts of uniformity, to oblige their brethren to comply with religious ceremonies and practices which they do not approve, grieve the conscientious, and drive them out of their communion, and embolden others, for the sake of gain, to sin against their conscience. Things indifferent should be treated as such; but to enforce them as indispensable, is a manifest contradiction.

The subject is again resumed, chap. x. 14. to the end. The primitive christians appear to have profited greatly by these directions. They were remarkably scrupulous about idolatrous compliances. Hence their refusal to eat blood, or to offer incense to the images of the emperors, by which the heathen detected them. (See *Pirie's Works*, vol. 5. p. 268—70.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. The rules here laid down are strikingly applicable to many public amusements, and worldly compliances, which may be of a doubtful nature. If it could be proved that they had no deterring influence on ourselves, still we should ask, will our example embolden others, who doubt the lawfulness of such practices, to act against their conscience, or grieve those whom we ought to love as brethren?

2. Is there only one God, and one Mediator between God and man? How improper then the invocation of angels and saints! Surely if these holy spirits were permitted to visit this world, and to observe the idolatrous worship offered to them by those who profess to be of the true church, they would exclaim, "See, they do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book. Worship God," (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.)

3. Do we grow in humility as we increase in knowledge?

What avails that knowledge which puffeth up? "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you, let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; for the wisdom that is from above, is peaceable, pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," (James iii. 13, 17.) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love," (1 John iv. 7, 8.) "Let not then our good be evil spoken of, for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," (Rom. xiv. 16, 18.)

CHAPTER NINTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—14.

PAUL ASSERTS HIS RIGHT AS AN APOSTLE TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE CHURCH.

THE Apostle had recommended his fellow-christians to abstain from eating at the idolatrous feasts of their heathen countrymen, lest they should occasion the less informed to fall into sin by similar compliances. He had also mentioned his own resolution to refrain from all unnecessary indulgences, rather than cast a stumbling-block in the way of a brother. In order still further to enforce the exhortation, he reminds them that he had submitted to much greater inconveniences for the sake of others. Though, as an Apostle of Christ, he had a right to temporal support from those who enjoyed the benefit of his ministry, he had

waived that privilege, and chose rather to labour with his hands, that he might not be chargeable to any. This he did during his residence at Ephesus, as appears from his farewell address to the elders of that church, (Acts xx. 33, 34.) "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." The same thing he did during his stay at Corinth. Referring to this, the sacred historian says, "Because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought, for by their occupation they were tent-makers," (Acts xviii. 3.) This noble instance of disinterestedness was laid hold of by his adversaries in the Corinthian church, to his disadvantage. As they were actuated by selfish motives *themselves*, in preaching the Gospel, they could not be persuaded that the Apostle's views were less sordid than their own; and as they found that he had declined receiving temporal support, they insinuated that he must have been conscious that he had no right to it; for indeed his claim to the apostolic office was more than doubtful. Their plausible arguments excited a degree of suspicion in the minds of the brethren; and it would seem they had alluded to them in their letter to the Apostle. To remove these unfavourable impressions, and to prove his title to the common privilege of the preachers of the Gospel, he now enumerates some of the evidences of his apostleship. With great animation he asks his opponents, 1. "Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? (*ελευθερος*, a freeman) have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Though he was not one of the twelve originally appointed to that office, yet he had been called in an extraordinary manner, by the great Head of the church, to be an Apostle, on that memorable day, when the Lord Jesus appeared to him as he was on his way to Damascus, and made him a chosen vessel, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. (Acts ix. 15.) Then Ananias informed him, that "the God of his fathers had chosen him that he should know his will, and see that Just One, and hear the voice of his mouth." (chap. xxii. 14.) Thus he could declare that he had not received the "Gospel from man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," (Gal i. 12.) He was called by the grace of God, and duly qualified by the Saviour, in the plenitude of his mediatorial power. He was furnished, in a special manner, with those miraculous gifts by which the other apostles were fit-

ted for the successful discharge of their ministry. He enjoyed the gift of tongues above many, (chap. xiv. 18.) and the Lord wrought special miracles by his hand, (Acts xix. 11.) so that he could say, "I suppose I am not behind the very chief apostles." (2 Epis. xi. 5.) He was also a *freeman*, not only in a spiritual sense, by being introduced into the liberty of the Gospel, but as having it in his power either to claim his temporal maintenance from the people, or to refuse it, if he thought proper, in certain cases and circumstances. (See verse 19.) On the occasion before alluded to, he had also been favoured with a *sight* of his risen Lord, when there shone round about him a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, (Acts xxvi. 13.) It was an indispensable qualification for the apostolic office, that those who were appointed to it, should be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, as in the case of those mentioned Acts i. 21, 22. To enable the twelve to testify of this fact, our Lord appeared to them, on several occasions, after he was risen from the dead; but surely the proof afforded to Paul, was no less illustrious and convincing, when he beheld him in the glory of his exalted state: Nor was this the only time that the Saviour appeared to him; when he came to Jerusalem, "as he prayed in the temple, he was in a trance, and saw him saying to him, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me," (Acts xxii. 17, 18.) Even in Corinth, the Lord spake to him by a vision, (chap. xviii. 9.) So that he might well say, when proving the resurrection of Christ, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," (chap. xv. 8.) Thus it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen. (Gal. i. 16.)

Another evidence of his apostolic character, was the remarkable *success* with which it had pleased God to crown his labours, especially in Corinth. Therefore, he adds, "Are not ye *my work* in the Lord?" There he first introduced the word of life, and, by his instrumentality, the Corinthian converts had not only been called to the knowledge of the truth, but had been endowed with a variety of spiritual gifts, (chap. i. 6.) Thus in the second Epistle, he observes, "Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," (chap. xii. 12.) He might therefore claim them, under God, as his *own work*; as a specimen of his zeal and ability in the

service of Christ. True, he did not pretend to an universal authority over the church, or mean to assert that every disciple had been converted by his labours; he knew that there were many thousands scattered throughout the world, who owed their conversion to the ministry of others, and in whose salvation he greatly rejoiced: There were also some, who, from ignorance or prejudice, would not acknowledge his apostolic character; but whatever these might pretend, the Corinthians *at least* had no reason to doubt his commission: 2. "If I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless (γὰρ) I am to you, for the seal (σφραγίς) of my apostleship are ye in the Lord." The very fact of their having become acquainted with the Gospel, and of their being united in church fellowship, proved the reality of his commission, just as a seal, affixed to a writing, establishes its genuineness. A figure somewhat similar he employs, 2 Epis. iii. 2. "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men." This was his general defence, in answer to those who presumed to question his authority. Such appears to be the connection of the following verse: 3. "My answer (ἀπολογία) to those who examine me (ἀνακρίνουσιν) is this." According to this view, these words belong to the preceding paragraph. Our translators seem rather to have connected them with what follows. Some might be ready to say, There is no great self-denial in Paul's refusing to be maintained by the churches, for in fact he has no right to this privilege. In answer to such objections, he asks, 4, 5. "Have we not power (ἐξουσίαν, a right) to eat and to drink? Have we not power to carry about (πρὸς αὐτὸν) a sister-wife (ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα), as well as the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" Had he not a right, as a minister of Christ, to such a reasonable maintenance from those who enjoyed his labours, as might leave him at liberty to devote his whole attention to the word of God and prayer? Had he not a right, if he thought proper, to marry a sister in the Lord, who might accompany him in his travels, and promote his personal comfort by her attentions? This not only the apostles of less note had generally done, but those whom they were accustomed to regard with the highest reverence, namely, James, and Judas, and Simon, the sons of Mary the wife of Cleopas, and the brethren or cousins of the Lord Jesus, according to the flesh; and particularly Cephas or Peter.—James is called the Lord's brother, (Gal. i. 19.) One should think that the meaning of the 5th verse,

is abundantly plain. There can be no doubt that Peter was a married man previously to his being called as an apostle; see Matt. viii. 14. From that passage it would also appear that he continued to live with his wife during our Saviour's ministry; and from what is here added, it is evident that he carried her along with him in his visits to different places. Nor was this a singular instance, for the Apostle's words certainly imply that the majority of his brethren in that office were married;—why should this be doubted, when it is mentioned as one of the qualifications of a christian pastor, that he should be “the husband of one wife, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity?” (1 Tim. iii. 4.) Yet the Roman Catholics, with gross effrontery, charge the Protestants with corrupting this text by rendering it “a sister, a wife,” giving as a reason, that “St Paul had no wife, and that he only speaks of such devout women, as, according to the custom of the Jewish nation, waited upon the preachers of the Gospel, and supplied them with necessities.” This is egregious trifling. Had this been the Apostle's meaning, he would have used only *one* of the terms employed, namely, ἀδελφή, a sister; the other word (γυνή) is explanatory of the former, and is constantly applied in the 7th chapter to a married woman, as distinguished from a virgin, (verse 34.) It cannot be a woman of substance that is here intended, such as those who waited on our Lord, (Luke viii. 3.) for this would have been an advantage, not a burden to the churches; nor can it mean a domestic servant, for it does not appear that the apostles were in a condition to maintain such attendants; nor would it have been reputable to have travelled with an unmarried woman. The reading of the Vulgate therefore (*mulierculam sororem*), and of the Rhemish Bible, “a woman, a sister,” is a mere evasion of the passage; the latter indeed, unwarrantably *inverts* the arrangement of the words. The proper Greek for *muliercula*, is γυναικίς, and is used in an unfavourable sense, as in 2 Tim. iii. 6, where it is rendered in the plural, “silly women.”

6. The Apostle next inquires, whether “he and Barnabas were the only Apostles who had no right to forbear working,” that is, to be supported without manual labour. This reference to Barnabas, reflects great honour on both parties. It proves that no secret grudge existed in their minds, notwithstanding their former contention, (Acts xv. 39.) It shews also, their great disin-

interestedness. Paul had abandoned considerable prospects in the world, for the sake of the Gospel, and Barnabas had sold his paternal inheritance in Cyprus, (Acts iv. 36, 37.) devoting the proceeds of it to the church, without having reserved so much as to be able to maintain himself without labour. Yet neither of these excellent men would burden the churches by allowing them to contribute for their support, but cheerfully wrought with their own hands. It was therefore very ungenerous and cruel, to ascribe this to a want of proper *authority* on their part. For both reason and Scripture teach the equity of maintaining those who spend their life in the service of others. Such is the voice of reason, as is evident from the universal usages of men. 7. "Who serves as a soldier (*στρατιώτης*) at any time, at his own charges? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of the fruit of it, and who tends (*ποιμαίνει*) a flock, and does not eat of the milk of the flock?" When a soldier abandons his secular employment to follow his general in the field, his expences are defrayed by the state, in every well regulated community. When a husbandman hires himself to labour in a vineyard, he is entitled to reasonable wages; but if he should plant the vineyard himself, who would ever doubt of his right to be maintained from the produce? and when a shepherd devotes his time to the watching and feeding of a flock, is it not proper that he should maintain himself from the milk of the flock? If this were admitted, then surely the Apostle, and his fellow-labourers in the ministry, had a right to be maintained by the churches. For were not they engaged in an arduous warfare with the rulers of the darkness of this world? As labourers in the Lord's vineyard they had enclosed and planted churches in various places. As pastors set over the flock of Christ, they had been exposed to many hardships in feeding and watching the flock; and they might say, in the language of Jacob, "By day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes," (Gen. xxxi. 40.)

But this right of maintenance did not rest merely on natural principles.—It was agreeable to the spirit of the divine law. 8, 9. "Say I these things after the manner of man (*κατά ανθρώπου*), or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." (Deut. xxv. 4.) By this humane regulation of the Jewish Lawgiver, even the irrational creatures are entitled to a reasonable recompense for their

labours. The oxen that were employed to separate the grain from the husks, by treading it out with their feet, were not to be restrained from satisfying their hunger. To allow them to suffer want, while in the midst of abundance, and engaged in preparing food for others, would have been a refinement of cruelty. This mode of thrashing, though to us it appears cumbrous and awkward, is frequently referred to in Scripture, (Isa. xxviii. 28. Hos. x. 11.) and is practised in many parts of the east to this day. (*Horne's Introd.* pt. 4. ch. 7. sect. 1. par. 4.) The sheaves being properly dried, were put into an enclosed space in an airy situation, the area of which was rolled hard, and swept clean; and bullocks or other cattle were driven round within it till the grain was completely unhusked.

Much ridicule has been thrown, by infidels, on the application of this passage by the Apostle, as if it were strained from its proper meaning; but the objection proceeds from ignorance. The law stands in connection with other precepts respecting mankind, evidently implying that it was designed to promote humanity and kindness in general. If even the inferior animals are to be treated with equity, certainly our fellow-men are not to be defrauded of their just recompense, while employed for our advantage. Such regulations distinguish the Mosaic law from all other codes, and pointedly condemn the wanton cruelty with which labouring animals are often treated. (Prov. xii. 10.) But this law was not intended to be *wholly* for the advantage of cattle: "Does God take care of oxen (only?)" No: its main design is to cherish a spirit of equity towards every creature. 10. "Does he not say it wholly (*παντως*) on our account? For our sakes indeed it is written; because (*οτι*) he that ploweth ought (*οφειλυ*) to plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope, should partake of his own hope, (*αυτου*). No one would submit to the labour of plowing the field, if he did not look forward to the enjoyment of the future harvest; nor would any person take the trouble to thrash the grain when reaped, if he were not animated by the hope of enjoying the fruits of his toil. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits," (2 Tim. ii. 6.) This is an universal law of nature, which keeps all the springs of industry in motion, so that in countries which are the seat of war, or where the inhabitants are exposed to constant rapine, the fields are allowed to lie waste: for the plowman cannot plough in hope that he shall reap the future harvest.

The Apostle brings forward another argument to prove the reasonableness of supporting the preachers of the Gospel, by referring to the superior value of those blessings communicated by their means to the souls of men, as contrasted with the inferiority of those secular benefits conferred on the preacher. 11. "If we have sown to you (*σπείρω*, in you, *M^r Knight*) spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" He employs a similar figure, when exhorting the believing Gentiles to contribute to the wants of their elder brethren in Judea (Rom. xy. 27.) "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things." To the Apostles, under God, the Corinthians owed all their religious privileges. They had, by their instrumentality, been born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The good seed had been sown into their hearts, which would spring up into eternal life. The blessings thus conferred were more precious than silver or gold; their price was above rubies. They were suited to their wants as immortal creatures—they were *spiritual* and eternal; the recompence, on the other hand, was *carnal*—all that they were required to impart in return, was the food that perisheth, which could not be considered in the light of an adequate reward, but as a reasonable token of brotherly love. Thus, acknowledging the present sent him by the church at Philippi, he says, "Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account," (chap. iv. 17.)

12. He further observes, "If others are partakers of this power over you, (ought) not we rather? But we have not used this power, but we endure (*συνεχόμεθα*) all things, lest we should offer (*δωμεν*, give) any hindrance to the Gospel of Christ." By the *others* who shared the temporal gifts of the Corinthians, the Apostle seems to allude to the factious teachers, who, it would appear were maintained by them in a plentiful manner (2 Epistle xi. 20.) By this turn of expression, he exposes their inconsistency in allowing strangers to devour their substance, whilst they suffered the devoted servants of Christ to struggle with the greatest hardships. He did not indeed plead for *himself*, for he had always acted on this principle—rather to bear the inconveniences of comparative want, than, by the use of his ministerial right, to hinder the success of the Gospel. It is probable that he saw, from the first,

that the Corinthians were actuated by a selfish and worldly spirit, and that had he accepted of any remuneration, however small, for his labours, it would have been ascribed to mercenary motives.

He next refers to the case of the Priests and Levites, under the law, who were maintained by the tithes and offerings. 13. "Do ye not know, that they who labour (*εργαζομενοι*) in holy things, eat from (*α*) the temple, and they who wait (*προσιδευσοντες*) at the altar, share with the altar?" To shew the importance of the public instructors of the people being wholly devoted to the service of the sanctuary, Jehovah had given no inheritance in the land of Canaan to the tribe of Levi; but had made sufficient (but not extravagant) provision for their support, by appropriating to their use a certain proportion of the produce of the ground, and certain parts of the sacrifices, and had charged the Israelites never to forget the Levite, or the stranger, or the fatherless, (Deut. xii. 12.) This was most reasonable; for the multifarious duties devolving on them, obliged them to constant attendance at the temple and the altar.

In the *last* place, he adduces the authority of Christ himself, who had, by an express law, provided for the maintenance of his apostles and ministers. 14. "So also the Lord hath appointed (*δευταξας*) that they who preach the Gospel should live by (*α*) the Gospel." By this expression he may not only intimate that he communicated this precept by divine inspiration, but he may also allude to the words of our Lord, when sending forth the twelve to preach the Gospel, and afterwards the seventy, (Matt. x. 9, 10. Luke x. 7.) "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat." "In the same house remain eating and drinking such things as they give, for the labourer is worthy of his hire." Nothing can be more irrelevant, than to argue, from these two verses, that the preachers of the Gospel should be maintained in the same manner as the ancient Levites, viz. by tithes; had this been the Apostle's meaning, he would have placed the particle of comparison differently; the inference extends only to the fact, that the preachers of the Gospel are to live by the Gospel; but no comparison is intended between the *mode* of raising their maintenance, and that of the former class.

Some attempt to establish a distinction between pastors of churches and itinerant preachers. The *former*, they argue, are not entitled to temporal support, but are commanded to work with their own hands. The *latter*, as being called to travel from place to place, have alone a right to live by the Gospel. But there is no foundation in Scripture for this distinction. The apostle certainly refers to the stated pastors of churches, when he says to the Galatians, (chap. vi. 6.) "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." The ordinary elders of churches are certainly intended in the exhortation to Timothy, (1 Epis. v. 17, 18.) where the very same passage above quoted is introduced, (ver. 9.) "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the labourer is worthy of his reward." The language of the apostle Peter clearly implies, that the pastors of churches are to be supported by the people: "The elders who are among you, I exhort. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," (1 Epis. v. 1, 2.) But if there were no danger of pastors assuming their office for the sake of gain, such cautions would have no meaning. It is strange that a prudential advice, delivered to the elders of the church at Ephesus, to labour with their hands, during a season of persecutions or difficulty, that they might be able to assist the weak, (Acts. xx. 35.) should be converted into an *universal law*, binding all Christian pastors, in the most favourable circumstances. The original founders of those churches which act on this principle, though they were willing to submit to this inconvenience, did not give up their *right* to temporal support; and it deserves the serious attention of such churches, whether the decay of religion among them be not owing to the circumstance of their pastors being immersed in worldly cares. The same principle which led the Apostle to *decline* this right, lest he should hinder the Gospel, would have induced him to give up every secular pursuit, which might be attended with the *same consequences*. Even when labouring with his hands, he received occasional support from other churches, (2 Epis. xi. 9.) It is more necessary that the stated pastors of churches should be enabled to give

themselves wholly to their work, "that their profiting may appear to all," than it is for general preachers. For the constant edification of a church surely requires more *application* than the delivery of occasional discourses to the world. Besides, is it not a principal part of the pastoral office, to preach the Gospel? We shall always honour those, who, in destitute places where the churches are small and poor, shew a readiness to support themselves in the work of the ministry; but we shall never allow, after such plain precepts of Scripture, that christian pastors have no right to a maintenance; or approve of the conduct of those who merely assist them as *poor brethren*, with the *alms* of the church. Every argument is brought forward in defence of this right, by the Apostle, that can be thought of. He appeals to reason—to the principles of natural equity—to the spirit of the Mosaic law, and to the express injunction of Jesus Christ. The reader will find a good discourse on this subject by Dr Bennet of Rotherham, from the 11th verse of this chapter, preached before an association of churches at Sheffield, 25th April 1821.

The reasoning of the Apostle implies, 1st, That Christian ministers should be satisfied with moderate provision; they are not to be enriched by their office, or rendered so far independant of the people, as to make them indifferent about the conscientious discharge of their duty. 2d, They are actually to labour in the work of the ministry. He only that endures hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, who plants and waters the vineyard, and who feeds and protects the flock, has a scriptural right to be recompensed for his services. 3d, It is implied, that they are to be maintained by those who enjoy the benefit of their ministry. There is no countenance given to the practice of exacting money for the support of ministers, from those who do not attend their ministry. 4th, They are to be supported by their people in a *voluntary* manner, from a sense of duty, and from a principle of gratitude and love. To levy tithes *by law*, for the support of the Gospel, on worldly men, who cannot appreciate the value of religious privileges, has, it is to be feared, greatly hindered the progress of divine truth. Those only who have reaped *spiritual* benefits from the preaching of the word, can be expected cheerfully to part with their *carnal things* to those who feed their souls. Nor do we wish any assistance from those who would not esteem it as a privilege.

REFLECTIONS.

1. With what diligence and activity should the ministers of Christ discharge the duties of their office! How great the guilt of those who do the work of the Lord deceitfully. To careless shepherds, Jehovah declares, "I will require my sheep at their hand;" "Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves—should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock," (Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.) On the other hand, "blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

2. How equitable and gentle the spirit of the Gospel! It announces no legal penalties in its defence. It appeals to the principles of reason. It refers to the authority of Christ. It seeks only the return of christian love. But if these considerations fail to produce their genuine effect, it asks no assistance from the kingdoms of this world, but teaches its ministers to endure all hardships, rather than *hinder* the salvation of souls.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 15—27.

PAUL'S READINESS TO BEAR WITH THE PREJUDICES OF OTHERS.

THE Apostle had proved the right which the ministers of the Gospel possess to be maintained by their flocks, by a reference to the natural principles of justice and humanity—by the authority of the Mosaic law—and by the express command of Christ. While, however, he thus established the rule, he did not intend to act upon it in *his own* case: 15. "But I have made use of none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be *so done to me* (*ὡς μοι*), for it were good for me rather to die, than that any one should make my boasting vain (*κενην*)."
The Corinthians were well aware, that during the time he had ministered to them the word of God, he had neither received or claimed any temporal recompense, but had cheerfully wrought with his

own hands, and should he again be permitted to visit them, he intended to act on the same principle; therefore they must not conclude from what he had just written, that he wanted to make himself burdensome to them; on the contrary, though he had nothing to glory of in the sight of God, he yet felt great satisfaction in reflecting that he had freely preached to them the Gospel of Christ, nay, he would rather die of hunger and fatigue, than be deprived of the pleasure which this reflection afforded him, or give any one occasion to say, that he was actuated by mercenary motives. But though he boasted of this disinterestedness as giving him a decided advantage over the factious teachers, he did not arrogate any merit to himself on that account; for he felt himself laid under the strongest obligations to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, *under whatever circumstances*. 15. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity lies upon me, (*anagkai*); yea, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel!" Dr Macknight thus paraphrases the first clause, "For when I preach the Gospel as others do, receiving maintenance, I have nothing to boast of." But this rather obscures the sense. The Apostle means, that though he might glory before men, in preaching without reward, he had no cause of boasting in the sight of God. This necessity did not arise from any external compulsion;—on the contrary, by ceasing to preach the faith of Christ, he might have conciliated the favour of the world, and secured his own ease and temporal advantage; whereas, by persisting in his work, he exposed himself to reproach, contempt, and danger. But it is a *moral* necessity of which he speaks—he could never forget the goodness of the Lord Jesus in arresting him in his career of persecution and blasphemy—in granting a full pardon of his aggravated crimes, and entrusting him with a stewardship in his house. This necessity further arose from a conviction of the value and truth of the Gospel—he knew that there was no other way of salvation: It arose from a feeling of compassion and benevolence towards his fellow men, whom he saw living without God and without hope: He beheld them perishing around him, labouring under a dangerous malady, and on the brink of endless ruin; and he considered it as an act of pure humanity to attempt their deliverance, and that in lifting up his voice to persuade them to be reconciled to God, he was doing nothing more than his duty; and, strictly speaking, could

not claim any reward. Finally, this necessity arose from an anticipation of the approaching judgment. It was his great desire to be pure from the blood of all men, by not shunning to declare all the counsel of God. He wished to give in his account with *joy*, and not with *grief*, and to escape the doom of the slothful and unprofitable servant. A similar sentiment occurs, Jer. xx. 9. where the prophet speaks of the dangers to which he was exposed by proclaiming the judgments of God: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name; but his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Should the Apostle neglect to discharge his duty by preaching the Gospel, he would be chargeable with the highest ingratitude; he might justly be accused of want of love to his fellow men; his conscience would for ever condemn him, and he would be left without excuse in the day of the Lord. The meaning of the following verses is not so obvious. 17, 18. "For if I do this *willingly*, I have a reward, but if *against my will*, I have been entrusted with a stewardship (οικονομίαν πιστευσάμεναι), what then is my reward? that in preaching I should make (θεσω, establish) the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse (καταχρησασθαι) my right (ἰσχύρις) in the Gospel." The words "what then is my reward?" seem to belong to the 17th verse. According to some, the Apostle alludes to the peculiar circumstances under which he was called to preach the Gospel. Had he voluntarily engaged in this service, from love to the truth and compassion to the souls of men, without any extraordinary commission, even in that case he would be graciously approved and rewarded, both in the enjoyment of present peace and of future glory. But as he had been arrested in so remarkable a manner, and entrusted with a stewardship in the church, as it were *against his will*, it was his desire to be distinguished, by some peculiar badge, above the ordinary preachers of the word, so as to avoid all suspicion of being actuated by slavish fear or worldly motives: What then was the reward which he sought? It consisted in the pleasure which he felt in making the Gospel free of expence to the people, that he might not abuse his right, by exercising it in an unreasonable or indiscreet manner. But it may justly be doubted, whether the Apostle would speak of his engaging in the work of the ministry against his will; for though at the time he was called, he was breathing out threatening

and slaughter against the disciples, he was certainly made *willing* "in the day of Christ's power," or, as he himself expresses it, before Agrippa, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," (Acts xxvi. 19.) According to others, therefore, the meaning is, "If I willingly preach the Gospel freely, I have the promise of a glorious reward, (Rev. ii. 10.) but if I act in a slothful and negligent manner, in the discharge of the office with which I have been entrusted—like one whose inclination does not go along with his duty, What then is my reward? What do I more than others? or how can I expect any recompence for my labour?" In this view, the sentence is elliptical, and the words, "I have no reward," must be supplied after the expression, "I have been entrusted with a stewardship." Such is Dr Macknight's rendering. "What then, he repeats, is the reward which I look for? Truly the satisfaction which I feel in making the Gospel of Christ without charge."

But the self-denial and disinterestedness of the Apostle did not stop *here*. He not only preached the Gospel free of expense, but in addressing the different classes of mankind, he aimed, as much as possible, at conciliating their minds, by bearing with their peculiarities and prejudices, so far as he could do so consistently with christian integrity. 19. "For though I be free (*ἀλλοτρίος*, a freeman) from all, I have made myself servant to all, that I might gain (*κέρδησιν*) the more." Thus he acted like a skilful fisherman who baits his hook that he may secure his prize, (Matt. iv. 19.) Though, as a Roman citizen, he was free from civil bondage to any man, he enslaved himself to all, by submitting to all manner of hardships, like the meanest servant, for their sakes, that he might gain over the greater number to the christian faith. It has been observed, that the sentiment in this verse is extremely beautiful.—A free labourer is entitled to a reasonable recompence for his services, but a bond slave has no claim for wages—the whole fruits of his industry belong to his master. In this situation the Apostle placed himself: 20—22. "And to the Jews I became (*ὑποτάχην*) as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law (*ὑπο νόμον*) as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law (*νόμοις*) as without law (not being without law to God, but under law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law; to the weak, (*ἀσθενέσι*) I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I am

become (*γενῶντα*) all things to all men, that I might by all means (*πᾶσι*) save some." We cannot conceive of a more amiable spirit than this. It strikingly displays the earnestness of the Apostle's mind, and the abiding impression he had of the *truth* and excellence of the Gospel. To the unbelieving Jews in *Judea*, he became as a Jew, by occasionally complying with the ceremonial rites of the Mosaic law, though he knew they were no longer binding on the conscience. Thus we are informed of his shaving his hair, and presenting the prescribed offerings after the expiration of his vow as a *Nazārite*. (Acts xviii. 18.; xxi. 23, 24.) In the same manner, for the sake of obtaining a more favourable hearing from those of his countrymen who were dispersed among the *Gentiles*, he abstained from the use of certain meats, and circumcised Timothy when he appointed him to preach the Gospel to that class (Acts xvi. 3.) Towards those of the Hebrew nation who were converted to Christianity, but who considered the Mosaic law as still in force, and who might therefore be considered as *under the law*, he shewed the same tenderness of disposition; though he would not be deprived of his christian liberty, where the purity of the Gospel was endangered. (Gal. ii. 14.) When addressing the *unbelieving Gentiles*, who disregarded the Jewish law, he kept the peculiarities of the Jewish nation as much as possible out of view, arguing from their own acknowledged principles, rather than appealing to the law and the prophets. (Acts xvii. 22—31.) But he did not mean that he was no longer under the authority of the moral law, as a *rule of duty towards God*, for he still considered himself as under the strongest obligations to obedience, from a sense of the redeeming love of *Christ*. To those who were but *partially enlightened* respecting some points of conscience, or who chose to observe certain days, or to refrain from the use of certain kinds of food, (Rom. xiv. 2, 5.) and who might therefore be considered as *weak brethren*, he condescended in like manner, abridging himself of his liberty, in things indifferent. Here the Apostle hints at the main scope of his argument, which is to reprove the selfishness of those who would not deny themselves the gratification of their carnal appetite for the sake of their scrupulous brethren. In short, he studied to render himself acceptable, in *all things* lawful, to *all* descriptions of men, that he might by every means *save some* of them from the wrath to come. "This," he adds, "I do, for the sake of the Gospel, that

I might be a *joint sharer* (*συνμέτοχος*) of it (with you)." 23. These privations he cheerfully bore, and this conciliatory spirit he exercised, not from any *necessity*, not from any deficiency in integrity and firmness, but to promote the success of the Gospel, and that he might partake of its glorious rewards with those who were converted by his ministry. The Apostle's argument then, is this, "I have, for the sake of my fellow-creatures, preached the Gospel gratuitously, and have submitted to many inconveniences, in complying with their peculiar infirmities; yet those of you who persist in eating idol sacrifices, grieve the consciences of the weak, and embolden them to act against their convictions!" Nothing could be better fitted to make them ashamed of their conduct. Nor would it avail to say, that he had *no right* to be maintained as an Apostle, for the fact of his appointment to that office was placed on an immoveable basis. Thus the present chapter which, at first sight, appears to digress abruptly to another subject, is closely connected, both with the preceding one, and with that which follows.

In submitting to so many hardships, some might be ready to charge him with want of prudence: he therefore refers them to the conduct of their heathen countrymen, who displayed the greatest self-denial and ardour, in pursuits of far *inferior* moment. 24. "Know ye not that those who run in the *stadium* (*στῆδον*) run indeed all, but one obtaineth the prize (*ἀγώνισμα*)? So run that ye may obtain, (*καταλάβετε*, lay hold of.)" This allusion would be quite familiar to the Corinthians, as the Isthmian games were celebrated in the neighbourhood of their city every four years. The stadium was an enclosed space, originally a furlong in length, whence it derived its name. Round this, seats were placed for the spectators, and the middle space was reserved for the foot and chariot races. At the entrance was placed the barrier, from which the competitors started; in the middle, the prizes were exposed to view; and the goal was at the further extremity; he who first reached it, in the foot races, was crowned as victor. It was necessary that those who engaged in the public games should be Grecians by birth, that their manners should be unexceptionable, and their condition free. Judges were appointed to preside, who enrolled the names and country of each competitor. These were then proclaimed by a public crier. Before the combatants engaged, they were obliged to take an oath, that

they would strictly observe the prescribed laws. "Those who were designed for these games," says M. Rollin, "frequented, from their most tender age, the gymnasia or palæstræ, which were a kind of academies maintained for that purpose at the public expence. In these places, such young people were under the direction of different masters, who employed the most effectual methods, to inure their bodies for the fatigues of the public games, and to train them for the combats. The regimen they were under, was very hard and severe. At first, they had no other nourishment than dried figs, nuts, soft cheese, and a coarse heavy sort of bread, called *μαζα*. They were absolutely forbidden the use of wine, and enjoined continence, which Horace expresses thus:

*Qui sudet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,
Abstinnit venere et vino.* ARS. POET. v. 412.

"Who in the Olympic race the prize would gain,
Has borne, from early youth, fatigue and pain;
Excess of heat and cold has often tried,
Love's softness banished, and the glass denied."

Besides the races of various kinds, *boxing* and *wrestling* were generally practised in those games. The victors were crowned with garlands of leaves, and had branches of palm put into their hands, their names were publicly registered, and from these the year was generally dated. Their emulation was further excited by the poems which were commonly made in honour of the successful competitors.

Keeping these customs in view, the language of the Apostle will be more easily understood. The Corinthians could not but know, that though many competitors might start in the foot race, only one of them could obtain the prize. Yet this did not prevent *all* from running, in the hope of first reaching the goal; so it was the duty of all the disciples of Christ to run in such a manner as to obtain the prize of their high calling; they must keep the allotted line, they must stretch every nerve, and run with patience and perseverance the race set before them. The Apostle makes a similar allusion in writing to the Philippians.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended (or laid hold of the prize); but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to those things that are before, I press (*διώκω*, I pursue) along the line (*κατὰ σκοπόν*) to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (chap. iii. 13, 14.) So Heb. xii. 1. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus." By ensnaring the consciences of their weak brethren, they were in danger of transgressing the laws of the course, and of coming short of the prize. So in writing to Timothy (2 Epis. ii. 5.) he observes: "And if any one strive as a champion (*ἀθλητῇ*), he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully," (*νομίμως*, according to the prescribed rules.) In the same manner, he here adds, (ver. 25.) "Every one that striveth in the combats (*ἀγωνιζόμενος*) is temperate (*ἐγκρατεύεται*) in all things. They indeed, that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." Not only did the combatants contend according to the prescribed laws, but, as already observed, they followed a strict regimen or rule of life, cheerfully denying themselves all sensual gratifications, and submitting to a severe course of discipline, in order to accustom their bodies to fatigue and danger; and yet, after all, though they should obtain the victory, their only reward was a wreath of green leaves, which must soon wither on the conqueror's brow. The language of the Apostle, when he calls the prize a *corruptible* crown, will appear the more forcible, if we consider that the crowns awarded in the Isthmian games were made of *dried parsley*. The great aim of the Greeks in thus rewarding the victors in the games, was to cherish a love of glory, or a desire of fame, as distinguished from a sordid love of money. Such an object was of great consequence to heathens, who knew of no higher motive to virtue, and who placed their happiness in the applauses of their fellow-creatures. But how superior the prize held out to us in the Gospel,—an incorruptible crown, which shall never lose its freshness, and shall adorn the temples of the glorified saints in the paradise above! Thus the apostle Peter animates christian pastors to the diligent discharge of their duty, by the consideration, that, "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," (1 Epis. v. 4.) So James

encourages the tried believer, by the promise of the crown of life, "which the Lord will give to them that love him," (chap. i. 12.) In another place the Apostle speaks of the crown of *righteousness*, which the righteous judge would give to him. (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) But if the *athletæ* underwent so many hardships for so poor a reward, would the disciples of Christ submit to no acts of self-denial, give up no carnal indulgence, to secure an unfading crown!

In fine, the Apostle again adduces his own example, to urge the Corinthians to circumspection. 26. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly (*αδηλως*), so I fight (*πυκτινω*, I box) not as one beating the air." He was not content to run *unobserved* (as the word properly signifies) among the crowd of inferior competitors, but was anxious to attract the attention of the judge, by leaving the others behind; nor did he run at a *venture*, without observing the prescribed line, or complying with the rules of the game, or as if he were indifferent whether he were crowned or not; nor did he fight, as the pugilists commonly did in their *preparatory exercises*, flourishing their arms about as if beating the air. This the boxers did before their adversary appeared, to shew their strength and dexterity. Thus Virgil, describing the combat between Dares and Entellus, represents the former as appearing within the ring:

Ostenditque humeros latos, alternaque jactat

Brachia protendens, et verberat ictibus auras.

ÆNEID. l. 5. v. 376.

"His brawny back, and ample breast he shews;

His lifted arms around his head he throws,

And deals in whistling air, his empty blows."—DRYDEN.

It was no *mock fight* in which Paul was engaged—he had to struggle with the corrupt inclinations of his fallen nature, like a man who wrestles with a powerful adversary. 27. "But I bruise (*υπησπιαζω*) my body, and bring it into subjection, (*δουλωγω*) lest by any means, having preached (or proclaimed) to others (*καρπυζω*), I myself should be rejected (*αδοκιμος*)." The expressions here used are all agonistical. The pugilists struck their opponents *under the eyes*, and endeavoured to throw them down. So the Apostle found it necessary to maintain a vigorous contest with

the body of sin which he carried about with him (Rom. vii. 24.), by inuring himself to every species of self-denial, and repelling his internal adversary by watching, fasting and prayer. We are surely not to interpret his language literally, with those of the church of Rome, as if he subjected his body to monkish *flagellations*, a kind of penance which is often practised along with the free indulgence of the sensual passions. It is an easier task to scourge the body, than to subdue its corrupt desires. In maintaining this combat, Paul did not wish to act the part of a mere *herald*, who only proclaimed the names of the combatants to *others*, but had no share in the victory; nor would he willingly incur the disgrace of being rejected, like those competitors who were found by the judges to want the necessary qualifications of birth and character, or who had not conformed to the laws of the contest, and who were consequently (*αδοκίμησι*) *without proof*. Such appears to be the meaning of the last clause. The Apostle had published to many the good news of salvation: how great then would be his guilt, if he himself should be refused the prize by the righteous Judge! By this he reminds the Corinthian teachers how vain their gifts would be, in the day of the Lord, should they be found to have enticed others into sin, or neglected the care of their own souls. And the caution is most salutary to all preachers of the gospel in every age. The Apostle frequently speaks with confidence of his final salvation; nor is it necessary to suppose that he expresses any contrary sentiment in this passage. But he knew that the *means* and the *end* were inseparably connected, and that those only who endure to the end shall be saved. If we *separate* these, we shall either sink into despondency, or be betrayed into false confidence. Nor does the assurance of the ultimate salvation of the saints, at all supersede the observance of every duty, and the practice of every virtue. (*See an excellent Sermon on this subject by the Rev. Dr Chalmers, from Acts xxvii. 21, 31.*)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Truly the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. To what hardships do they cheerfully submit to secure their respective objects! The mariner encounters the dangers of the sea, to bring home the produce of foreign countries:—The soldier “seeks the bubble reputation at

the cannon's mouth :"—The scholar consumes the midnight oil, and wastes his strength, in search of knowledge ; and even the pugilist exposes his body to wounds and bruises, for the sake of applause or gain. And shall the christian, who has in view an incorruptible crown, refuse to deny himself, and to take up the cross daily ? Shall the christian minister *especially*, submit to no inconveniences or hardships, that he may win immortal souls ? Unless we be ready to forsake every earthly relative, and every temporal advantage, when duty calls, we cannot be his disciples, (Matt. x. 37, 38.) How few are there who are willing to practise the disinterestedness and benevolence of Paul. How many that seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's !

2. How great the power of the Gospel, which could change such a bigotted persecutor as Saul of Tarsus, into so active and generous a philanthropist ! He could afford no higher evidence of his repentance—no clearer proof of his sincerity. Is the obligation so strong on ministers to preach the Gospel ? How great then the danger of those who corrupt or overlook it, in their ministrations ! (Gal. i. 8.) Nor is the danger less, on the part of hearers, if they neglect the great salvation. The christian life is one of ardour and difficulty, and we can never expect to be crowned, if we indulge in spiritual sloth or presumption. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of us should seem to come short of it," (Heb. iv. 1.) In the ancient games, out of many competitors, only one could obtain the prize, but in the christian race, all who run with patience in the prescribed course, shall certainly obtain.

CHAPTER TENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—14.

THE CORINTHIANS WARNED BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES.

HITHERTO the Apostle had argued against the practice of frequenting idolatrous feasts, chiefly on the ground of expediency, as having a tendency to ensnare the conscience of the weaker brethren. He had also referred to his own example in preaching the Gospel freely, that he might not hinder its success. He now proceeds a step further, and shews the dangerous consequences that might result to the persons *themselves* who attended these feasts, and the incompatibility of such compliances with the purity of the christian character. Some appear to have defended their conduct, on the plea that such occasional intercourse with the heathen in their worship, could do no injury *to them*, as they were already the objects of the divine favour, and enjoyed all the external privileges of the church; and by their open profession of the Gospel, they were sufficiently distinguished, in the heathen temples, from the idolatrous worshippers. This plausible argument the Apostle here takes up, and happily exposes its futility and dangerous tendency. He reminds them of the extraordinary privileges enjoyed by the people of Israel, as members of the Old Testament church. They had been rescued from the bondage of Egypt, by the mighty power of God; they had been sustained, by a series of miracles, while in the wilderness of Arabia, for the space of forty years. To them were granted special tokens of the divine presence, and they enjoyed the ordinances of religious worship in their greatest purity. Yet, "with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." By their proneness to idolatry and rebellion, they were repeatedly visited with miraculous judgments; and of all who came out of Egypt by Moses, only a few

individuals were permitted to enter the promised land. The same argument is employed by the Apostle in writing to the Hebrews, to shew the danger of apostacy, (chap. iii. and iv.) and his conclusion is very solemn, "Let us labour therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief," (chap. iv. 11.) Indeed, the history of that remarkable people is repeatedly referred to by our Lord and his apostles, as illustrative of the dispensations of Providence towards the church, and we shall deprive ourselves of a great source of improvement, if we consider the history of the children of Israel, as a dry detail of facts, having no reference to *our* situation, as members of the christian church. 1, 2. "But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, (ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ.)" By the expression, "all our fathers," the Apostle seems to intimate the unity of the church under both dispensations. He is addressing chiefly converted *Gentiles*, and yet his language is the same as if he had been writing to his own countrymen. They were the *ancestors* of the Jews according to the flesh, but they were the *predecessors* of both Jews and Gentiles in the church, as the professing people of God. Jehovah was pleased to guide them by a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. It was spread over them as a covering to screen them from the burning heat of the sun. "The cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp." (Numb. x. 34.) By appearing as a pillar of fire by night, it not only supplied the want of light, but would effectually secure their camp against the attack of ravenous beasts. It served also to direct them in their march, by changing its situation, according to the will of God. "When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that, the children of Israel journeyed; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents," (Numb. ix. 17.) When pursued by the Egyptian army, the cloud of the divine presence came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; "and it was a cloud and darkness to *them*, but it gave light by night to *these*, so that the one came not near the other all the night," (Exod. xiv. 20.) It would also seem that the Israelites were occasionally supplied with showers from the cloud. To this some apply the words of the Psalmist, Ps. lxxviii. 9. "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst con-

firm thine inheritance when it was weary." In short, it was an appropriate emblem of the glory of that God who dwelleth in light inaccessible. Thus, "all our fathers were under the cloud." The Apostle next refers to the extraordinary deliverance of the people of Israel from the pursuit of Pharaoh, and his numerous host. By the express *command* of God, they encamped in a narrow defile between two mountains, with the waters of the Red Sea in their front. Their cruel enemies were coming on behind, so that there seemed no means of escape. (Exod. xiv. 2, 3.) They began to bewail their unhappy condition, but they were told to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He commanded Moses to "lift up his rod and stretch out his hand over the sea, and divide it, that the children of Israel might go on dry land through the midst of the sea." At the same time the pillar of cloud went before their face, and stood behind them. "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided; and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry land, and the waters were a wall on their right hand and on their left," (verses 19—22.) By thus passing through the sea, they professed their faith in the power and goodness of God, (Heb. xi. 29.) and they testified their subjection to Moses as their divinely appointed law-giver. Without this, they would not have ventured into such an extraordinary situation. Accordingly we are informed that, after seeing the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore, "the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses," (verse 31.) On this memorable occasion, they celebrated their great deliverance, in that beautiful song recorded in the 15th chapter of Exodus. Thus they were "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They professed their belief in his prophetic character, by following the movements of the cloud in their encampments, and by setting forward at the divine command through the channel of the Red Sea. The whole congregation were thus initiated into the dispensation of Moses, and men, women, and children were taken into covenant with God, and were laid under the strongest obligations to obey his commandments, as delivered by his chosen servant. Some imagine there is here an allusion to the mode of baptism by *immersion*, and that by the waters standing as a wall on each side, and the cloud being extended over them, the Israelites were emblematically

immersed; but this representation seems to be scarcely consistent with the facts of the history. It would appear, from the reference already made to the book of Exodus, that the cloud went from before the camp of Israel, and stood *behind* them on the occasion of their passing through the sea, and the Apostle's language does not seem to intimate that they were baptized by the cloud and by the sea *simultaneously*, but rather that they were baptized as well by the cloud as by the sea. It has been observed that the design of the whole history, is to prove that the Israelites were not covered by the water, which could only partially wash them by the occasional dashing of the waves. Some think that the passage of the Israelites was accompanied with a violent storm of thunder and rain, which greatly disconcerted their enemies; and some such event seems to be implied in the expression, "the Lord looked through the pillar of cloud and of fire, and troubled the host of the Egyptians," (Exod. xiv. 24.) To this they likewise apply the language of the 77th Psalm, 16—18: "The waters saw thee O God, the waters saw thee, they were afraid, the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven." According to this view, the Israelites might be baptized *by effusion*. (See Dwight, Sermon. 159.) But whether there be any reference to the *mode* of baptism is doubtful. In the argument prefixed to this chapter in our common bibles, the Jewish sacraments are said to be types of ours. Of course, the event here alluded to, is made a type of christian baptism; but as baptism itself is only a symbol, it seems harsh to speak of the type of a type; nor can the passage through the Red Sea, the eating of manna, and the drinking of water from the rock, be properly considered as *sacraments*. The design of the Apostle is to shew the vanity of trusting in external privileges, whether by these we understand the ordinances of religion, or extraordinary interpositions of Providence.

3, 4. The Apostle further remarks, that the congregation of Israel "did all eat the same spiritual meat (*βρωμα πνευματικον*), and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." When the unleavened bread which they had brought out of Egypt was exhausted, the Lord was graciously pleased to feed them with manna from heaven, of which we have an account, Exod. xvi. 14. "When the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the

wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost, on the ground: And Moses said, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat; and it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." A sufficient quantity was furnished daily for the use of the people; but on the sixth day they gathered twice as much as on any other, and none fell on the seventh or Sabbath day. By this wonderful provision, six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, were sustained in a barren desert for forty years, till they arrived in the land of Canaan. A pot of manna was placed by the side of the ark, as a standing memorial of the divine interposition. This is called spiritual meat, as descending from above. So in Ps. lxxviii. 23—25. "He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and rained down manna for them to eat; he gave them of the corn of heaven; man did eat angels food." But this name is chiefly given to it *as an emblem of Jesus Christ* the bread of life, according to the express declaration of our Lord himself, John vi. 32, 33. "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." As the Israelites were sustained in the enjoyment of temporal life, by this bread which Jehovah provided for them, so we must live on Christ by faith, as the great source of our spiritual life, (ver. 54.) In like manner, they "all drank of the water which was brought from the rock." On two separate occasions the congregation was thus supplied, Exod. xvii. 6. and Numb. xx. 11. The former seems here alluded to. At the divine command, Moses smote the rock Horeb, in the sight of the elders of Israel; when the waters gushed out, "they ran in the dry places like a river," (Ps. cv. 41.; lxxviii. 15, 16.). The supply thus obtained was very abundant. Not only did the whole multitude, with their cattle, satisfy their thirst on that occasion, but it would seem that the stream of water, thus opened, formed a channel for itself, and followed the people in the desert. Thus we do not read of any scarcity of water being felt for about thirty-eight years. This the Apostle expresses, by saying, "the rock followed them." By calling it a *spiritual rock*, and the waters *spiritual drink*, he teaches us, as he afterwards explains himself, that "this rock was an emblem of Christ." He was smitten by the rod of Heaven, before the elders of Israel, and from his pierced body flow the re-

freshing streams of salvation. This is that river "which makes glad the city of God," and which follows the church through the barren wilderness of this world, till it shall arrive at the heavenly Canaan. It may be here observed, that the language of Scripture is not always to be interpreted according to the literal sense of the words. The Hebrews frequently omit the particle of similitude. Thus (Gen. xli. 26.) it is said, "The seven good kine are seven years;" that is, an emblem of seven years. So John x. 9., our Lord says, "I am the door;" and xv. 1. "I am the true vine;" and in this passage, "That rock was Christ," namely a type of Christ. From not attending to this peculiarity of idiom, the church of Rome has fallen into the error of transubstantiation, alleging that the words, "This is my body," necessarily imply, that the substance of bread and wine is converted into the real body and blood of Christ.

Yet after all these proofs of the divine favour towards Israel, the greater number of that generation fell under the displeasure of God: 5. "But with many of them (*ἰς τοὺς πλεοῦν*, with the greater part,) God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." So Heb. iii. 17. "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" After the return of the spies, the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron, and cried out, "Would God we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in the wilderness! Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?" Jehovah heard their murmuring, and declared that he would surely do as they had spoken. They should be doomed to wander in the wilderness till all the grown persons were consumed; but their children, who, they said, should be a prey, would be brought into the land of promise, Numb. xiv. 32, 33. Thus their carcasses were *strewed on the ground* (*κατιστρύφθησαν*) like the seared leaves by the wintry blast; and thus severe vengeance was taken on their unbelief, ingratitude and presumption. But if God did not spare the natural branches of the olive tree, but cut them off because of unbelief, let not those that are ingrafted in their room, suppose that the greatest outward privileges will avail them, if they fall under the same condemnation, Rom. xi. 20, 21.

These judgments were inflicted, not merely as a reproof to the

men of that generation, but as a warning to the people of God in all future times. 6. "Now these things were made types (*τύποι*) or examples to us, that we may not lust (*ἐκδιψήσατε* *εἰς* *εἰς*, be lusters—*Macknight*) after evil things, as they also lusted." Here the Apostle seems to refer to the conduct of the mixed multitude, (Numb. xi. 4—6.) who fell a-lusting after the dainties of Egypt, and whom the children of Israel joined in their ungrateful and ungenerous reflections, "Saying who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away, and there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes!" On that occasion the Lord gave them their desire, but took vengeance on their inventions. He supplied them with quails in his wrath; and while the flesh was yet between their teeth, he smote the people with a very great plague, (verses 31, 33.) Ps. lxxviii. 26—31. Were not those who frequented idolatrous feasts displaying the very same spirit? Were they not equally guilty of inordinate desires after forbidden indulgences? Could they be surprised if God, in righteous judgment, should "send leanness to their souls?"

But whatever pretences they might urge in their defence, he could tell them, that to feast in an idol's temple could be viewed in no other light than as an act of idolatry. Now, they could not be ignorant of the fatal consequences which the people of Israel had brought on themselves, by the very first act of idolatry recorded of them. 7. "Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them, as it is written, (Exod. xxxii. 6.) The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play or dance, (*ταῖς* *ταῖς*)." The Apostle here alludes to the idolatrous feast celebrated by the Israelites (in the absence of Moses) in honour of the golden calf, when three thousand men fell by the sword of the Levites, (ver. 28.) It was also well known, that the most shameful excesses frequently accompanied the idolatrous worship of the heathen gods. This was particularly the case at Corinth; and therefore, by attending such festivities, the disciples of Christ in that licentious city, would expose themselves to the danger of debauchery; and the Apostle could not conceal his suspicion, that the persons who defended the practice of attending the heathen temples, were indirectly pleading for the indulgence of their sensual passions: Wherefore, he adds, 8. "Neither let us commit

whoredom (*πορνεία*) as some of them committed, and fell on one day, *twenty-three thousand*." Here allusion is made to the sin of Israel, who committed whoredom with the women of Moab, through the treacherous policy of Balaam, as related, Numb. xxv. On that occasion, they joined themselves to the worshippers of Baal-peor, the principal deity of the Moabites; and the consequence was, that twenty-three thousand died of the plague in one day. In the book of Numbers, *four and twenty thousand* are represented as having fallen; but the difference is accounted for, by supposing that the Apostle omits those who were slain by the sword of Phinehas, and the Judges of Israel, verses 5, 9.

By the practice alluded to, they would also provoke the displeasure of the heavenly Saviour, who, as a divine person, was present with the church in the wilderness, and bore the provocations of that perverse people. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents." The turn of expression here is very remarkable: The Saviour is represented as having been tempted by the people in the wilderness. This, I think, is illustrated by what is said, Exod. xxiii. 20. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for *my name* is in him." Such language cannot surely be applicable to Joshua, or to any created being, but is strictly true of the great Angel of the covenant, who bears the government of the church upon his shoulders, and to whom belong all divine perfections. And why should it be thought incredible, that the ancient Israelites should tempt Christ, of whom it is said, "he is before all things, and by him all things consist?" Some propose to supply the word *God*, and to read, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted God," (See *Dr Macknight*); but surely such a supplement ought not to be admitted without necessity, and renders the expression harsh and unnatural. It is true, God is said to have "spoken in these last days by his Son;" but this evidently refers to his mediatorial character. Indeed the simple command, "let us not tempt Christ," implies his proper Deity, as the disposer of all the events of providence. So in the 78th Psalm, the Israelites are said to have tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust; yea, to have tempted and provoked

the Most High God, (verses 18, 41, 56.) Such temptations of Providence are expressly forbidden by the divine command, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," (Deut. vi. 16.) On the occasion here alluded to, we are informed, Numb. xxi. 4—6. that the Israelites journeyed "from mount Hor, by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our souls loath this light bread; and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died." Now by frequenting the temples of idolatry, the disciples at Corinth were virtually despising the spiritual provisions of the Gospel, and complaining of the holy ways of God as burdensome and difficult; they were *presuming* on the patience and goodness of the Almighty Saviour, by wilfully throwing themselves in the way of temptation; and was it a small matter to tempt *Him*? By distrusting the promises of God to carry them through all the perils of the present state, they would also tempt the Saviour. They must likewise beware of *repining* at the dispensations of Providence, or when exposed to persecution for the truth's sake, lest they should share the divine judgments, like those unhappy persons who were cut off by the angel of death. 10. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer (*ολεθρευτου*)."
 Here the Apostle alludes, in a particular manner, to those men who brought up a false report of the promised land, of whom it is said (Numb. xiv. 37.) that they "died of the plague before the Lord." Perhaps he may also refer to the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who *murmured* against Moses and Aaron, and wished to intrude into the priest's office, (Numb. xvi. 13.) who were swallowed up, by the ground cleaving asunder, besides the 250 men who offered incense contrary to the law, who were consumed by a fire from the Lord, (verses 33, 35.) In this *last* view, the passage affords a solemn warning to those who should murmur at the superior gifts of others, or reject the authority of the Apostle.

He would therefore again repeat, 11. "now all these things happened to them as examples (*τυποι*); and they are written for our

admonition (*νουθεσιας*) on whom the ends of the world are come," or "to whom the ends of the ages have reached (*εις ους τα τελη των αιωνων καταβηκον*). The Apostle calls the Gospel dispensation *the ends of the ages*, as being not only the last revelation of the will of God, which shall continue till the consummation of all things, but as that to which all the previous dispensations were subservient and preparatory, and in which they had their accomplishment. These miraculous judgments were intended as *types* to all future generations, and are set up as beacons to warn the professing people of God, against those fatal errors on which so many have suffered shipwreck. Thus, in addressing the Romans he observes, (chap. xv. 4.) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." The Old Testament, then, is not to be viewed as an antiquated service-book of an abolished ritual, but as an accurate chart to guide us in our christian journey, and to point out the dangers which we must avoid. In the dispensations of God towards Israel, we may see, as in a mirror, his method of procedure towards his professing children; and it may be laid down as an unerring rule, that the same sins will sooner or later be visited with the same punishments. 12. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." The Corinthians might think themselves quite secure by their religious knowledge and spiritual privileges. They might be ready to treat the admonitions of the Apostle as inapplicable to them, and imagine that persons of *their* superior attainments could be in no danger of apostacy. They might affect to be able to maintain their spirituality of mind amidst the dissipation and excesses of idol-worship. But they would soon discover their folly in making the hazardous experiment. They were standing on the brink of a precipice, where the ground was ready every moment to slip from beneath their feet, and carry them headlong to the bottom.

Perhaps they might plead, that by occasionally attending the heathen temples, they wished to conciliate the good opinion of their unconverted countrymen, and to avoid the danger of persecution. But such arguments proceeded on a mistaken view of the providence of God. He never brings his people into such circumstances as to lay them under a necessity of making sinful compliances to secure their safety. He can make his grace suf-

ficient for them in every extremity. He may indeed exercise their faith and patience by manifold trials, but *along with these* he will provide the means of deliverance. Besides, the Corinthians should recollect that they could not even plead the peculiar danger of their situation. Hitherto they had been mercifully preserved from the more serious attacks of persecution, they had met with no extraordinary trials in providence, and therefore they were the more inexcusable in rushing into temptations from the world. 13. "No temptation (*πειρασμος*, trial) hath taken or seized (*αλλαφεν*) you but such as belongs to man (*ανθρωπινος*, human); and God is faithful, who will not permit (*ακου*) you to be tempted or tried above what ye are able, but will make, with the trial, also a way of escape (*υπαγωγην*, a passage) that ye may be able to bear it (*υπομειναι*)." The Apostle seems here again to allude to the situation of the Israelites when encamped by the Red Sea. God then brought them into very trying circumstances; but when just ready to sink under the trial, he opened up a *passage* for them, by dividing the waters and destroying their enemies. Now the trials which the church at Corinth had hitherto endured, were only such as are incident to human nature, in the ordinary course of events; but should they be brought into the most difficult situation, they might rely on the faithfulness of God, who would never load them above their ability, but would so proportion his grace to their necessities as to enable them to *carry the burden* he might be pleased to lay upon them. They must not therefore run before Providence, or attempt to open up ways of escape for themselves, but calmly trust his word, and wait for his salvation in the path of duty. He would "therefore affectionately warn them, as *his beloved brethren*, to *flee from idolatry*," as a most dangerous and deceitful enemy. To this foe no quarter must be given, no terms must be offered. Every approach to it would endanger the purity and peace of their consciences, would expose them to the displeasure of Him who is a jealous God, and was utterly inconsistent with their allegiance to Christ their only Master and Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The truth of the Mosaic history is fully established by this passage of Scripture. Some of the most miraculous events are

here appended to, as undoubted *facts*, and arguments are drawn from them, as illustrating the general conduct of Providence. Indeed the authority of the Old and New Testament must stand or fall together. How wonderful a people are the descendants of Abraham! Their fathers were the objects of the special protection of Heaven: The sea opened to give them a passage—the *fiery* *rock* poured forth its streams to refresh them in the desert—the *sky* rained down nutritious provision round about their tabernacles: Jehovah went before them as their guide—when they obeyed his voice, he blessed them with health and peace—when they turned aside from his commandments, he sent fiery serpents to chastise them—or the earth opened and swallowed up those who were out their strength, by obstructing their progress through the wilderness. Well might Moses exclaim, “Ask both of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of the spectrum to the other, whether there hath been any thing like this great thing, or hath been heard like it?” (Deut. iv. 32.)

The dispensation of divine grace does not supersede the necessity of our *own* *faithfulness* on our part. Are we not possessed of the same *human* nature as our Jewish fathers? Are we not exposed to the same *temptations*? Can we expect to enter the promise-land, if we indulge the passions of the flesh, if we idolize any creature or object; if we murmur at the ways of Providence, or are *tempted* by our unbelief? What will it avail to say to him, “Thou art my God, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets?” He will say unto us, “Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity.” Let us rejoice that we are free from extraordinary temptations; but let us not walk into forbidden paths, or tempt God to give us up to the devices of our own minds. “By faith we stand.”

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 15—24.

FURTHER ARGUMENTS AGAINST EATING IN IDOL-TEMPLES.

The apostle had exhorted the disciples at Corinth to flee from idolatry, as from a subtle and powerful enemy. He had also

shewn, by a reference to the history of ancient Israel, that the possession of religious privileges will not secure those from the visitations of divine wrath, who presumptuously sin against God. He now adds, 15. "I speak as to wise or prudent men (*φρονιμίαις*;) judge ye what I say." The Corinthians boasted of their superior knowledge and experience in divine things. He would therefore appeal to them, as discerning persons, who were able to judge of the force and propriety of what he had already advanced, and was now about to say; he particularly alluded to the nature and design of the Lord's supper, and to the manner of life which was incumbent on those who partook of that sacred ordinance: 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless (*ὃ εὐλογούμεν*), is it not the communion, or joint participation (*κοινωνία*) of the blood of Christ? The bread (*τὸν ἄρτον*, the loaf) which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The communion cup is called "the cup of blessing," as being the sign and pledge of all heavenly and spiritual blessings; these flow to us through the shedding of Christ's precious blood. It is said to be *blessed*, as being solemnly set apart, by prayer and thanksgiving, from a common to a sacred use, as the expression (*ὃ εὐλογούμεν*) is thought to signify; or according to others, the preposition *δια* (for, on account of) is understood, and then the passage would read, "for which we give thanks," namely to God. (So M'Knight translates it.) This indeed seems all that is implied; for the New Testament does not countenance the idea of *consecrating* the bread and wine, according to modern language: but the distribution of the elements is preceded by the offering up of solemn thanksgiving for the divine benefits so richly bestowed on us, especially for the unspeakable gift of Christ Jesus. Hence the Psalmist says, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord," (Psa. cxvi. 13.) Hence it is said that our Saviour "took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples," (Matt. xxvi. 27.) The *wine* is an appropriate emblem of the blood of Christ, which was shed for the remission of sins, by which the conscience is purified from dead works, and spiritual life is imparted to believers; and the same cup being equally shared by the disciples, signifies the joint participation which they have in all the benefits of his atoning sacrifice, their mutual fellowship with God as their reconciled father, and their common reliance on the

* The right of private judgment seems here to be given to the members of the church.

death of Christ as the ground of their hope. The same may be said of the bread: It represents their "joint participation of the body of Christ."—The same loaf being broken and distributed among the communicants, is a lively and affecting emblem of that sacred body which was broken or bruised for our sins, and on which we must feed by faith, as the true nourishment of our souls. It is evident that the loaf used in the Eucharist, is still called bread in this passage, after the words of institution are supposed to have been pronounced, which surely implies that no change is effected on its substance.

The 17th verse is not so clearly expressed. "For we being many are one bread, one body (*ὅτι ἕς ἄρτος, ἡ ἓν σὰρξ, ἡ πολλὰ ἑσμεν*) for we all partake (*ἀνίσταμεν*) of the one bread (*ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός ἄρτου, ἡ τοῦ ἑνός loaf*)." According to this version, the Apostle, alluding to the symbol of bread used in the Lord's supper, compares the church at Corinth, which consisted of many individuals, to one loaf, which is composed of a great many grains of corn, formed into one mass, intimating the unity of sentiment and character, and the close fellowship which subsists among the disciples of Christ. He also compares the church to the human body, which consists of a great variety of members organized into one frame, animated by the same spirit, communicating aid and support to each other, and among whom the closest sympathy exists. But the verse may be rendered in a manner more perspicuous, and equally agreeable to the original; "as the loaf is one, so we the many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf;" that is, as one cake or loaf of bread is distributed among all the members of the church, it is intimated that they all partake of the same hope, are distinguished by the same principles and dispositions, as one family round their father's table, or as one body animated by the same spirit. From this passage, we may perceive the error of the church of Rome, which gives unbroken wafers to the communicants, instead of broken portions of the same loaf, and withholds from the people the cup of blessing altogether. The enlightened members of the church at Corinth would not dispute the accuracy of the Apostle's views on this subject. The ordinance of the supper resembled a feast upon a sacrifice, and was a most solemn expression of their faith in the true God, and of their communion with him, and with each other, through his Son Christ Jesus. Consequently it implied a renunciation of all other objects of worship, and a resolu-

tion to walk agreeably to his commandments. Was the eating of idol sacrifices consistent with this view of that ordinance?

He further illustrates his main position by a reference to the sacrifices of the Mosaic law. 18. "Behold (*βλέπετε*, look at) Israel after the flesh; are not they who eat of the sacrifices partakers of altar?" In the case of the *peace-offerings* especially, only a part of the victim was consumed on the altar, and the remaining part was eaten by the offerers, implying their acceptance with God, and their admission to holy fellowship with him; and the act of feasting together at the same table, has, in all ages and countries, been considered a token of reconciliation and friendship. These sacrifices were offered by the *true* Israel, before the coming of Christ, in the faith of the predicted Messiah; and they were still offered by the Jewish nation, who, by their blind adherence to the law, had forfeited their spiritual privileges, and were no more than Israelites *after the flesh*, or by carnal descent, as distinguished from the faithful in Christ Jesus. A feast upon a sacrifice, therefore, was not only an expression of faith in the object of worship, but an act of *communion* with him.

19. Did the Apostle, then, mean to retract what he had said *before* about the vanity of idols, and the fabulous origin of the heathen mythology? Did he mean to say "that an idol is any thing, or that which is offered to idols any thing?" Had an idol god any actual existence, or distinct power; or did the meat offered in sacrifice to an idol, change its nature, and become, on that account, *defiled* or unfit for use? With this difficulty, he *supposes* the opposite party to press him; and he answers, that he did not mean to assert any thing contrary to what he had formerly advanced. But he would now speak plainly out, in giving his opinion respecting the heathen deities and their worship. 20. "But the things which the heathens (*ἡ ἡμετέρα*) sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons (*δαίμονας*) and not to God." The objects of idolatrous worship he denominates demons,—a word which is sometimes used in a good sense by the ancient Greek writers, as equivalent to *genii*. So it is applied to the spiritual monitor which Socrates so frequently refers to, (*Plato, Euthyph.* §. 2.). In *this* sense it is never used by the sacred writers, but always signifies evil spirits, and is therefore not absurdly rendered by our translators, *devils*. It is admitted that this name (*δαίμονας*) is more properly descriptive of the *chief* of the fallen angels; but the language seems to imply, that the whole system of Pagan mythology originated in

the craft of wicked spirits. The received translation is warmly opposed by Dr Campbell in his sixth Dissertation (part. 1. §. 14.) who seems much offended at so opprobrious a name being given to the heathen deities; but though the word *demon* had been retained, it would have conveyed the same meaning to an English ear. Many of the heathen deities were the spirits of deceased men, whose characters had been disgraced by flagrant crimes; even their Jupiter Maximus Optimus, was by no means a fit pattern for imitation; and the Apostle seems here to intimate, that they were more properly objects of *abhorrence* than of *adoration*. In fact, not only did the spirits of darkness succeed in their attempt, to banish all knowledge of the true God from the minds of men, but established in its place an impure and absurd superstition, by which they secured their usurped dominion over the human race. They set themselves up as *rivals* of the true God, and transferred the homage of the deluded worshipper, if not *directly* to themselves, at least to imaginary beings, whose character too nearly resembled their own. Indeed, many learned men have thought that there was a direct agency of evil spirits exercised in maintaining the pagan system. On this principle they account for the surprising answers sometimes given out by the heathen oracles, amounting to a sort of prescience, (*Rollin's Auct. Hist.* b. 3. c. 4.) This was the general opinion of the ancient fathers of the church, who considered the silence of the oracles in *their* day, as a remarkable proof of the triumph of Christianity over the powers of darkness. It is also certain, that some heathen nations to this day worship the Devil, or evil spirit, whose anger they deprecate by prayer and sacrifices. The Apostle seems to allude to the words of Moses respecting the idolatries of ancient Israel, Deut. xxxii. 17. "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God;" where the LXX. read *ἑρμῶν δαίμονων καὶ ὀνείρων*. See also Ps. cvi. 37. *οἱ ἐβόων ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ*. Whatever sense we attach to these words, the Apostle argues, that to feast in an idol's temple was in truth an act of idolatry, and a mark of *fellowship* with the idol. "Now," says he, "I do not wish you to be partakers (*κοινωνοὶ γίνεσθαι*) with demons." This was virtually to renounce the Gospel, and to become *partners* with the enemies of Christ. Such a coalition was utterly incompatible with their professed subjection to *him*, and therefore they could not, while they persisted in attending such idolatrous feasts, have any fellowship with the Saviour in the ordinance of

the supper. He would therefore at once tell them, 21. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons—ye cannot partake (*μετεχουσιν*) of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons." The Jewish altar was anciently called *the table of the Lord*, (Mal. i. 12.) and the same title is here given to the table on which the communion elements were placed, as being appropriated to his service, and as the place of special communion with him in his worship. The communion table is sometimes styled an altar, but improperly; for by one offering up of Himself, our Saviour hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and the New Testament church recognizes no other priest or sacrifice. Dr Macknight observes, that "in the heathen sacrifices, the priests, before they poured the wine upon the victim, tasted it themselves; then carried it to the offerers and to those who came with them, that they also might taste it, as joining in the sacrifice, and receiving benefit from it." Thus, at Belshazzar's impious feast, it is said, "they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." (Dan. v. 4.)

The Apostle further alludes to the relation in which christians stand to their Lord, as the *Bridegroom* of his church. By professing the true faith, the Corinthians had been divorced from the objects of their idolatrous worship, and had been *espoused* to the heavenly Saviour. Every act of idolatry, then, must be viewed in the light of spiritual *adultery*, the figure which is constantly used for idolatrous worship in the Old Testament Scriptures. This would certainly *excite the jealousy* of the church's spouse, who will not tolerate any *rival* in our affections. This surely implies the proper deity of Christ,—who, as one with the Father, is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. It behoved them to reflect on the consequences of turning aside from the true object of worship—"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy (*παραζηλούμεν*), are we stronger (*ισχυροτεροι*), than he?" 22. Did they imagine they would be successful in a contest such as this; or would "their hearts endure, or their hands be strong, in the day that he should deal with them?" (Ezek. xxii. 14.)

23. The following verse may be considered as a repetition of the argument of those who defended the practice of frequenting idolatrous festivals. They pleaded, as before observed, chap. vi. 12. that "all things, or all kinds of food, were lawful for them." Now, the Apostle admitted that it might be lawful under the

Gospel, to partake of every kind of meat as the gift of God ; but he observes, "all things are not *expedient*," (*or expedient*). It is not always proper to use our liberty, even with respect to lawful things ; there are times and circumstances in which it may be most prudent to deny ourselves : particularly, we must consider what effect our conduct will have upon *others*, and how far compliance with certain customs will conduce to our own edification. He would therefore again repeat, that even allowing that "all things were lawful" to a christian, "*all things do not edify*." In such an endearing union as that which subsists among the disciples of Christ, we must not consult our own humour or advantage merely, but the good of our brethren : 24. "Let no one seek his own, but every one (the profit) of another." A similar rule occurs Phil. ii. 4. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." By indulging our liberty in an unseasonable manner, we may embolden another to sin, or may grieve the tender conscience of the weak, which is contrary to our Saviour's golden rule, "What ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets."

REFLECTIONS.

1. With what holy joy should christians approach the table of the Lord ! Here they are admitted to hold communion with God as their reconciled Father ; they partake of the symbols of their Saviour's broken body and shed blood ; they proclaim their mutual love before the world. Shall they then retain any interfering object, or continue in any forbidden practice ? "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion hath Christ with Belial ?" Let us beware of provoking the displeasure of him whose name is Jealous. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people and thy father's house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." (Pa. xlv. 10, 11.)

2. Happy the church in which the members seek not their own interest or gratification only, but every one also the advantage of his brother. Let christians avoid every indulgence, however apparently safe, that would prove the occasion of another's fall. The observance of this rule would supersede a thousand

minute directions respecting our conduct in life. Having named the name of Christ, let us depart from iniquity; let us renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and act as a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 25—33. CHAP. XI. 1.

CONCLUSION OF THE SUBJECT.

THE Apostle had argued against the lawfulness of joining in heathen festivals, as being inconsistent with the proper observance of the Lord's Supper. The one was intended to represent the fellowship of believers with Christ, and the other must be regarded as an act of communion with demons. He now proceeds to other branches of the same question. As formerly observed, it often happened, that a great number of victims were slain on solemn occasions; and as but a small part of these was used in sacrifice, and the worshippers were not sufficiently numerous to consume the whole in the idol's temple, a considerable portion of the flesh of these animals was carried to the public markets, and disposed of to the inhabitants as common food. In allusion to this, the Apostle says, ver. 25. "Whatsoever is sold in the market (*μακίλλω*) eat, asking no question on account of conscience." The Corinthian converts might freely use whatever was thus offered for sale, without making any inquiry, whether or not it had been sacrificed to an idol. In this case their conscience would neither be weakened or defiled. Dr M'Knight gives a different turn to this passage; he says, "asking no question about its having been sacrificed to idols, on account of your knowledge that an idol is nothing." If this were the Apostle's meaning, why were they forbidden to ask the question? But it was not necessary to the maintaining of a good conscience, that they should know whether the meat purchased in the market, had been offered to an idol or not. They might lawfully eat it notwithstanding, "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness (7)

πλεονεξία) thereof." 26. This is a quotation from Psalm xiv. 1. where the sovereignty of the true God is asserted. The earth and its various productions, in all their abundance, belong to Him, as the creator and preserver of them all, to the exclusion of all false gods; we may therefore receive those gifts which he has expressly appointed for the use of man, with a grateful sense of his goodness. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," (1 Tim. iv. 4.)

27. "But if any of the unbelievers (τῶν ἀπιστῶν) call you, and ye be willing (θελῶτε) to go, eat whatsoever is placed before you, asking no question on account of conscience." The Apostle here supposes another case. If any of their heathen neighbours or friends, should invite them to a private entertainment, they were not to be so scrupulous as to refuse all intercourse with them in civil or social life; they might freely partake of the food presented to them, without enquiring whether any part of it had been used as an idol sacrifice or not. While christians are forbidden to hold fellowship with unbelievers in religious ordinances, or to be conformed to the world, by imbibing its spirit and taste, they are not required morosely to shut themselves out from the society of other men, or to refuse the customary marks of civility that may be offered to them. This is what the ancient Pharisees affected to do, and for which our Saviour censured them, both by precept and example. (Mark vii. 15. Luke xix. 7, 10.) In this way Christianity is distinguished from all false systems of religion, which attach undue importance to outward observances and trifling singularities, while they neglect the culture of the heart. The word "feast" is improperly inserted in the 27th verse, as it obscures the sense, and would seem to contradict what the Apostle had said before respecting the unlawfulness of attending idolatrous feasts. Nothing more than a private entertainment is meant.

It might so happen, however, that in the family to which the christian was invited, there might be a believing slave, or converted relative, or another christian guest, who might know that a certain dish placed on the table, had been partly used as an idol sacrifice, and might give information of this fact to the person invited. 28. "If any one say to you, This has been sacrificed to an idol, do not eat, on account of him that shewed it, (μὴ καταναλάτε)

and on account of conscience." In that case it would be the duty of the believer *not to touch* this particular food, lest he should give offence to this christian brother. Or, the person who gave the information might be an idolater, who might make the remark, by way of *trying the principles* of the christian; still it would be the duty of the latter to abstain, lest he should harden the other in his false worship. This act of self-denial should be cheerfully performed; for the observation of the Psalmist would hold true *again*, in a different sense, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." If, then, all that the earth contains belongs to God, he can be at no loss to supply the wants of his people, when, from a regard to his authority, and the good of their fellow-men, they sacrifice the gratification of their appetite. Some, from not attending to the scope of the Apostle's argument, have supposed that this second quotation has been added by some officious transcriber; and it is omitted in the Syriac and Vulgate versions; but it is quite in the Apostle's manner; and, according to the view above given, furnishes an appropriate argument for self-denial: "For man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Deut. viii. 3.)

29, 30. When the Apostle spoke of not eating *for conscience sake*, he did not of course, allude to the conscience of the christian invited; because he supposes *him* to be free from all scruples on the subject, and to attach no superstitious regard to an idol; but he refers to that of the *person who informed him*, who is not supposed to have the same knowledge, and would be grieved or emboldened to sin, by the example; and therefore he explains himself by adding, "Conscience I say, not thine own, but that of the other." The sense of the following words is not so clear. "For why is my liberty judged by the conscience of another?" This may be a question supposed to be put by the Corinthian believer. "Why should he be abridged of his liberty, by the unnecessary scruples of another man?" Was the conscience of one to be a rule to all? If the more enlightened brother could lawfully acknowledge the divine goodness, in the reception of every kind of food, why should he be found fault with on that account? "For if I by grace partake, why am I reviled (*βλασφημοῦμαι*) on account of that for which I give thanks (*ευχαριστῶ*)?" In reply, the Apostle remarks, that for *this very reason*, namely, that he did profess to acknowledge the divine goodness in the reception

of His mercies, he ought to consult what would be most conducive to the glory of the divine perfections. 31. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all things (*παντα*) to the glory of God." Now this implies, that even in satisfying our natural appetites, we are not to consult our own pleasure or inclination *merely*, but what, under all circumstances, will tend most to the honour of God, with which the spiritual good of our fellow creatures is intimately connected. Or, the question may be put by the *Apostle*, in name of the Corinthian believer, to convince him of the impropriety of indulging his liberty in an indiscreet manner. "Why should you give occasion to another to condemn you in his conscience, or allow your good to be evil spoken of, when, in the enjoyment of temporal mercies, you profess to acknowledge the kindness of God?" Others think the *Apostle* refers to such actions as lie between God and the christian's *own soul*, and are not subject to human observation. In *these*, the same degree of caution may not be necessary, providing we have faith before God, and are fully persuaded of their lawfulness in our own minds. (Rom. xiv. 5, 22, 23.)

It may be useful to dwell more particularly on the rule laid down, verse 31. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is a precept of permanent and universal obligation. Many confine their notions of religion to certain acts of worship—to particular times, places, or ceremonies. But here it is represented as the governing principle, rule, and end of all our actions. Nothing, at first sight, seems more foreign to the nature of a religious duty, than the ordinary acts of *eating* and *drinking*. Yet even in *these*, the glory of God must be kept in view. We are to receive his mercies with thankfulness, with a deep sense of our unworthiness, joined to contentment with the allotments of his providence. We are to use them with moderation, in order to recruit our strength, and to fit us both for *his* service, and the ordinary duties of our station. Thus, all excess, riot, and intemperance, must be banished from our tables. Even unnecessary expense should be spared, while so many around us require our temporal aid, or religious sympathy. So, in the avocations of worldly *business*, we must do all to the glory of God; by diligence, punctuality, a strict adherence to truth and justice, by a habit of kindness and affability towards all, and by guarding against the immoderate love of

gain. In the discharge of the *relations* of civil life, the same great end must be pursued. With respect to worldly amusements, we must consider how far they are conducive to our spiritual improvement, to the edification of others, to the honour of the Gospel, and the glory of God. Such also must be our great object in assuming a religious profession. In short, we are to let our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works, may glorify our Father in heaven. The essential glory of God cannot be advanced by us, but his *declarative* glory is promoted, when every creature accomplishes the end of its formation, according to its capacity and sphere of action.

32, 33. By *thus acting*, we shall be "blameless and harmless, the children of God without rebuke," (Phil. ii. 15.) We shall "present no occasion of stumbling, (*αποσκευα*) either to Jews or Gentiles or to the church of God." We must study, as much as possible, to live peaceably with all men, treating the various classes into which they are divided, with patience, tenderness, and respect, not unnecessarily exciting their prejudices or wounding their feelings, and conducting ourselves in such a manner towards *all*, as to give them no evil thing to say of us, (Rom. xii. 17, 18.) To enforce this, the Apostle again refers to his own example, "As I also please every man in all things (*παιτα, παντι*); not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many (*των πολλων*) that they may be saved." This appears to have been a favourite maxim with Paul; he had expressed the same sentiment before, (chap. ix. 22.) He studied to render himself acceptable to all descriptions of men, not by countenancing their vices, or adjusting his conduct to their humours, but by an upright and inoffensive behaviour, sacrificing his inclinations and profit to promote the salvation of as many as possible. The next verse more properly belongs to this chapter, as it introduces no new subject, but contains the improvement of the whole discourse. "Be ye followers (*μιμεται*, imitators) of me, as I also am of Christ." It was the great aim of the Apostle, to walk in the footsteps of his divine Master; and the Corinthians would do well to imitate his example, not by a blind submission and indiscriminate approbation, but only in as far as he followed Christ. *He* is the only perfect model and infallible standard, the most perfect pattern of virtue that was ever exhibited in human nature, and though we must necessarily fall short, we must constantly aim at entire conformity to him in

and grace subdues the power of sin

all his imitable perfections. In following the best of men, we may err; and therefore, we must exercise an enlightened discrimination; and be imitators of *them* only so far as they are of *Christ*. But the conduct of the Apostles was formed on this model, and they could, without ostentation, exhort the disciples to imitate their spirit and to emulate their virtues. Thus, Phil. iii. 17. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them that walk so; as ye have us for an example;" and chap. iv. 9. "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you." (So 1 Thes. ii. 10.)

REFLECTIONS.

Does the earth belong to God, and the fulness thereof? Trust us, confide in him for the supply of all our need. He will not suffer us to want any good thing. Does he crown our life with abundance? Let us gratefully acknowledge his goodness, and beware of abusing his mercies. Does he exercise us with the trial of poverty? Let us remember how he feeds the ravens, how he adorns the lilies of the field, and firmly believe that he will supply all our want out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Let us walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. The prejudices of men may be various, and it may not be easy to please them all in every respect. But a holy, peaceable, and benevolent spirit will disarm the opposition of the greatest numbers, and may, through the divine blessing, lead them to investigate the nature of that Gospel which produces such excellent fruit, and to say, "We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you of a truth."

So let our lips and lives express
The holy Gospel we profess,
So let our works and virtues shine
To prove the doctrine all divine.

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
The honours of our Saviour God;
When the salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the power of sin."—WATTS.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

SECTION I.—VERSES 2—16.

ON THE IMPROPRIETY OF WOMEN PRAYING WITH THE HEAD UNCOVERED.

THE Apostle now proceeds to point out various abuses which prevailed in the public worship of the Corinthian church. But before doing this, he solicits their favourable hearing, by expressing his satisfaction with their conduct *in general*. 2. "Now I praise you brethren, that ye are mindful of me in all things, and hold fast the ordinances (*κατακρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις*) as I delivered them unto you." The word *παράδοσις* is sometimes rendered *tradition*, as in 2 Thess. ii. 15. ; iii. 6. and from such passages the church of Rome maintains the authority of unwritten traditions ; but we cannot be certain that they are the same which the Apostles delivered to the churches. Indeed it is manifest that many of the observances of *that* church are in direct contradiction to the apostolic testimony. On the other hand, the New Testament writings are sufficiently explicit respecting the ordinances and discipline of a christian church. The first impropriety which the Apostle adverts to, is the practice of the female members of the church at Corinth, engaging in devotional exercises *with the head uncovered*. In the abundant distribution of spiritual gifts, it would seem that some of these individuals were endowed with the spirit of prophecy, under the impulse of which they took part in the services of the church, either by engaging in prayer or praise, or by communicating the instructions which had been imparted to them by supernatural suggestion. There can be no doubt that such gifts were bestowed on pious women. Thus Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost ; thus Mary, the mother of our Lord, expressed her grateful praises in the spirit of prophecy ; and thus Anna the prophetess spake of the glory of

the infant Saviour to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke i. 42, 46 ; ii. 38.) The spirit was poured on the daughters and handmaidens of Israel, (Acts ii. 17, 18.) and Philip the evangelist had four daughters, virgins, who did prophecy, (chap. xix. 9.) In the use of this endowment, however, the female converts at Corinth do not seem to have consulted the dictates of prudence and discretion. Instead of delivering their sentiments in a modest and diffident manner, with their head decently attired, they appear to have been elated with vanity, to have thrown aside their veil, and to have affected the manner of heathen priestesses, instead of following the example of inspired women in other churches. The idolatrous priestesses, it is well known, pretended to be inspired by their patron god, and uttered their responses with wild looks and dishevelled hair. Thus the Cumean Sibyl is represented by Virgil as seized with an ungovernable impulse, when about to foretell the fortune of Eneas :

—————“ *Subito non vultus, non color unus
Non comæ mansere comæ ; sed pectus anhelum
Et rabie fera corda tument ; majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans ; afflata est numine quando
Jam propiore dei.*” ÆNEID, b. 6. v. 47.

“ Thus while she said
—Her colour chang’d ; her face was not the same ;
And hollow groans from her deep spirit came.
Her hair stood up—convulsive rage possess’d
Her trembling limbs, and heav’d her lab’ring breast :
Greater than human kind she seem’d to look,
And with an accent more than mortal spoke,” &c.—DRYDEN.

It may seem surprising that persons so distinguished as these christian prophetesses were, should have in any way abused their spiritual endowments ; but that these extraordinary gifts were not always exercised in a becoming manner, is evident from what is said, chap. xiv. These gifts were not, in fact, a sure evidence of genuine grace, nor did they secure the possessor from those irregularities and imprudences to which human nature is liable in the present imperfect state. Some have thought that these females did not actually pray or prophecy in public, and they re-

fer to chap. xiv. 34. and to 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12., where women are forbidden to speak in the church. According to this view, the Apostle merely refers to their joining in these exercises as *performed by others*. But the language will scarcely admit of this interpretation—the same terms are used with respect to both sexes, verses 4, 5. We may, however, reconcile the practice here alluded to, with the other passages, by supposing, that Paul here refers only to the prophetesses or inspired females; and that in chap. xiv. 34. he alludes to uninspired females; or we may suppose, that even the prophetesses, though permitted to pray or praise, were not allowed to teach. The practice of female preaching has been introduced in modern times by certain classes of professing christians; but it may be questioned whether it can derive any support from such passages as this. It seems to confound the order of nature, and to violate the natural feelings of the sex; nor can the pretence of *inspiration* now be urged in its defence. It is the opinion of some, that the Apostle wholly condemns the practice as an innovation, though at first he only animadverts on the disorderly manner in which it was performed. This is the sentiment of Dr Macknight.

In ascertaining the propriety of any action or custom, it is of importance to keep in view the subordination established throughout the various branches of that great family of which God is the supreme Head. 3. "But I wish you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." According to the divine constitution, *man* is to be viewed as placed under the immediate authority of the Lord Jesus, the second Adam, as the First-born among many brethren. On the other hand, the woman has, in the wisdom of God, been placed in subjection to *man*, being formed for his advantage, as an help meet for him, whom she is therefore required to obey, both by the first constitution of nature, and in the arrangements of the spiritual creation. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body," (Eph. v. 23.) In the same manner, Christ, in his character as *Mediator*, is the servant of the Father, having humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is true he is now exalted to the right hand of power, and all things are put under his feet; but it is manifest that *He* is excepted, who did put all things

under him. This does not imply any essential difference or inferiority of nature on the part of our Lord; for even man and woman, though holding different *relative* situations, are partakers of one common nature. With reference to his mediatorial character, our Saviour says, "My Father is greater than I," (John xiv. 28.) With respect to his divine nature, he also says, "I and my Father are one," (chap. x. 30.)

4, 5. Keeping this general constitution in view, the Corinthians ought to consider, that "Every man praying or prophesying, with his head covered, (*κατα κεφαλῆς ἔχων*, having a veil on his head) dishonoureth his head, (*καταισχυνῇ*)." To cover the face was a token of shame and mourning. Thus it is said of David, when fleeing from Absalom, that he "went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and all the people that were with him covered every man his head," (2 Sam. xv. 30.) So when mourning for the death of his son, the king is said to have covered his face, (chap. xix. 4.) It was also a token of subjection, as in the case of women. Now it is inconsistent with the joy imparted by the Gospel, to exhibit the usual symptoms of shame or grief, in the ordinary assemblies of the faithful. It is also improper for man to assume any appearance of *voluntary humility*, or to reverse the order of nature, by descending from the rank in which Providence has placed him. By putting on the mark of female subjection, he dishonours *Christ* his spiritual head. In the same manner, "Every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled, (*ἀκατακαλυπτα*) dishonoureth her head." It was very indecorous in the female sex to lay aside that becoming article of dress by which their natural modesty is cherished, and their subjection intimated, and to engage in prayer or praise with the head *uncovered*, assuming a masculine and confident air, in the worship of God, and in the presence of the other sex. From the earliest times female delicacy has been consulted by the use of a veil. Thus Rebekah, when she saw Isaac, "took a vail and covered herself," (Gen. xxiv. 65.) So Boaz desired Ruth to "bring the vail which she had on her," (chap. iii. 15.) It was indeed unusual for any woman of character to appear *unveiled*, except in presence of her near relatives; and this is still the custom in eastern countries. By throwing off this becoming part of dress, the woman "dishonoured" the man, "her natural head," by claiming an equality with him, and re-

jecting the sign of her subjection. It should also be recollected, that under the law those women who were tried by the law of jealousy, on suspicion of adultery, were brought to the priest, who was ordered to "set the woman before the Lord, and *uncover her head*," (Numb. v. 18.) But to *shave* the head was considered by a woman the greatest mark of infamy, being in some countries the punishment of adultery. Thus Tacitus, speaking of the German women who were guilty of that crime, says, "*Accisis crinibus, nudatam, coram propinquis, expellit domo maritus, ac per omnem vicum verberare agit.*" (De Mor. Ger. s. 19.)

It was also enjoined in the case of female captives, as a token of their having sustained a grievous calamity, (Deut. xxi. 12.) Now the uncovering of the head is compared by the Apostle to *shaving* it, in order to set the impropriety of the practice in the strongest light, and to make the persons concerned, at once ashamed of it. "It is one and the same thing, (*ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*) he says, with being shaved." But not only was the shaving of the head disgraceful—even to wear the *hair short* was inconsistent with female propriety, and was considered as a great diminution of female beauty. In the East, the different manner of wearing the hair was the chief mark of distinction between the sexes. Whilst the women allowed it to grow, the men wore it *short*, as requiring less time to dress it, and being less cumbersome in the field. This appears, from ancient coins and medals, to have been the practice of the Greeks and Romans. It seems also to have been the custom of the Hebrews, who only allowed their hair to grow when under the Nazarite vow. It was therefore a mark of great effeminacy in Absalom to affect long flowing hair. The Apostle therefore proposes, ironically, that if the woman would not consent to be veiled, her hair should be cropt or polled (*κρίσασθω*). 6, 7. "For if the woman be not covered let her also be shorn; but if it be disgraceful (*αἰσχρὸν*) for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be veiled. Man indeed ought not to cover his head, he being (*ὑπαγεῖναι*) the image and glory of God." He was originally formed after the divine likeness; and though fallen and depraved, he still reflects the glory of his Creator, in the wonderful structure of his body, and in the excellent endowments of his mind. He ought not therefore to wear any mark of subjection which would obscure his natural dignity, as the representative of God in this lower world, deriving his being and authority immediately from him; "but the

woman is the glory of man." It is enough to her praise, to say, that she reflects the greatest honour on man, who is highly distinguished in being placed over a creature of such beauty and worth.

The Apostle was advancing no new doctrine, nor, in what he said, did he mean to cast any reflection on the female sex; for their proper station and sphere of action might be clearly ascertained, by considering the purposes for which the human pair was formed, and the order of their first creation. 8. "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman from (ἐξ) the man." Man was first created as the more excellent of the two; and the woman was formed of a rib taken from the body of the man, to intimate the close union subsisting between them, and the duty which the man owes to the woman, to cherish and defend her, as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Hence the Hebrew word *Ishah*, woman, which is properly the same as ἐξ ἀνδρός "from man." 9. "Moreover (καὶ γὰρ) the man was not created on account of the woman, but the woman on account of the man." But that is always esteemed the more important, for the sake of which any other thing is produced. This was the case with respect to man. The promotion of his happiness was the reason assigned for the formation of woman. "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him," Gen. ii. 18. The Mosaic history of the creation is here obviously alluded to.

Much difficulty attaches to the 10th verse. "On this account the woman ought to have power (ἐξουσία) on her head, because of the angels (διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους)." It is allowed on all hands, that the word ἐξουσία, *power*, here signifies a vail; according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, in which the word *radid*, a vail, is derived from *radad*, to subdue, being the well-known token of the woman's subjection to the man; but the difficulty attaches chiefly to the words, "because of the angels." Some have thought the word ἀγγέλους is here used in the sense of *spies*, and that the Apostle refers to those heathens who occasionally visited the christian assemblies, on purpose to discover some irregularity, as a ground of accusation against them. So *Schleusner—Ob exploratores Paganorum*. And this indeed would be a very good reason why the female worshippers should appear decently veiled. It must also be admitted, that the word ἀγγέλους, sometimes signifies a messenger or spy, (James ii. 25.) Others think there is a reference to the circumstance of Eve being deceived by an evil angel,

in consequence of which, she was subjected to the authority of her husband; and it is admitted that the word *αγγελοι*, is applied to the fallen spirits in this same Epistle, (chap. vi. 3.) The Apostle also alludes to the fact of Eve being deceived, in a passage somewhat parallel, (1 Tim. ii. 14.) "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." It was therefore very proper that the women should appear veiled, to keep them in mind of their first mother's transgression. It is, however, more probable that the Apostle here refers to the *holy angels*, who may be considered as present in our worshipping assemblies,—a consideration well fitted to repress every irreverent feeling, and to inspire the mind with solemn awe. These holy creatures are represented as veiling their faces with their wings, in token of profound humility, (Isa. vi. 2.) Perhaps this doctrine is implied in the direction of the wise man: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel that it was an error," &c. (Eccles. v. 6.) Some, however, suppose, that in this last passage, the word *angel* means the priest. Paul solemnly charges Timothy, (1 Epis. v. 21.) "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels." And our Lord says, "There is joy in heaven among the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth," (Luke xv. 10.) These expressions seem to imply that the holy angels are present in the assemblies of the faithful.

The Apostle, however, did not mean to discourage the christian females, by what he had just advanced; for both sexes, under the Gospel dispensation, are alike the objects of divine grace, and partakers of the same privileges. 11. "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord." The one is not taken, and the other *left*. "For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free—there is neither male nor female," (Gal. iii. 28.) Some of the brightest displays of christian excellence have appeared in the characters of pious women.

In the same manner, if man was *first* created, yet, ever since, he has been born and reared by woman, whom he is therefore bound to love and honour; and both sexes have their being from God the Father of all. 12, 13. "For as the woman is from the man (α), so also the man is by the woman, and all things are of God." But he would refer the matter to their own sense of propriety: "Judge

in yourselves, is it becoming ($\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$) that a woman should pray to God unveiled?" Was it consistent with common decency, that she should part with her veil, on an occasion, which, above all others, calls for reverence and propriety of conduct, namely, while engaged in the spiritual worship of God? This was the voice of nature herself, no less than the dictate of inspiration. By the different constitution of the sexes, she obviously instructs us that they should be distinguished by appropriate marks, in the form of their dress, and especially in the fashion of their hair. Nature has given to the woman long flowing locks, which at once heighten her beauty, and serve as a natural veil, to cherish her modesty: but she has not been so bountiful to man, because his true dignity and honour are placed not in the elegance of his form, but in the vigour of his mind. 14, 15. "Does not nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair ($\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$) it is a dishonour ($\alpha\iota\sigma\chi\eta$) to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her instead of a veil ($\alpha\pi\tau\iota\ \pi\epsilon\pi\iota\beta\alpha\lambda\mu\epsilon\sigma\iota$)."¹ We are thus taught, that there is a natural feeling of propriety in the human mind, whose voice is not to be despised, and which acts as a safe-guard of public decency. (Phil. iv. 8.) The apostle Peter forbids christian women to be *too solicitous* about the "outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or putting on costly apparel," (1 Epis. iii. 3.) But it is disgraceful to a man to spend much of his time in adorning his person with effeminate delicacy.

16. Finally, the Apostle observes, "But if any man appears ($\delta\epsilon\iota\chi\eta\iota$) to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." If any one, after all that had been said, should still be disposed to justify the practice here exposed, in a contentious spirit, the Apostle could inform him, that the churches in *Judæa* knew of no such custom, nor any other *Gentile church* with which Paul was acquainted. It was therefore an unprecedented novelty peculiar to the Corinthians themselves; and he hoped, that on seeing its impropriety, they would, without further delay, abandon the practice.

¹ See Milton,

describing our first mother, observes,

"She as a veil down to the slender waist,

Her unadorned, golden tresses wore

"Dishevell'd."

PAR. LOST, b. 4. v. 304.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Some may think it beneath the dignity of an Apostle, to descend to such minute particulars, as the fashion of the hair ; and to *some*, the discussion may have appeared uninteresting. But we are concerned to glorify God in every part of our conduct, and these outward peculiarities are often a sure indication of *character*. The manners and customs of the ancients ought to be studied, as a subject interesting in itself, and highly important in the illustration of Scripture. The Apostle lays down a few general directions respecting the proper demeanour to be observed in the worship of God, founded on natural principles, and the reason of things ; but in *after ages*, the teachers of Christianity, neglecting the great doctrines of the gospel, and the duties of morality, occupied the attention of their hearers with long and fruitless declamations on the reigning fashions of the times, regarding dress and manners. The Christian religion sanctions national customs, wherever these correspond with the great principles of truth and holiness ; affected singularities in dress, receive no countenance from the apostolic writings.

2. There are many ways in which pious females may be useful, though no longer inspired to pray or prophecy in the church: by works of charity and benevolence—by their modest and consistent deportment—by instructing the young and ignorant of their own sex—by their writings—by promoting the success of religious institutions—by conducting social meetings for prayer among themselves,—Christianity places them in their proper sphere, and deprives them of no opportunity of exerting their peculiar talents, or of using their influence to the greatest advantage.

3. It is incumbent on us to keep the ordinances as the apostles have delivered them to us, without adding to, or diminishing form, the word of God.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 17—34.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Apostle notices another irregularity which prevailed in the church at Corinth, in their mode of observing the *Lord's supper*. This ordinance was instituted by our Saviour, shortly before his death, as a memorial of his sufferings—as an affecting exhibition of the benefits which flow to us through his atonement, and as a pledge of mutual love. It was observed by the church at Jerusalem, from the period of its formation. “They continued steadfastly (*αὐτοὶ ἀνεκλινομένους*) in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,” (Acts ii. 42.) It was for this purpose that the disciples at Troas came together on the first day of the week, (chap. xx. 7.) and there is no doubt the institution of the Supper formed an important part of those ordinances which the Apostle delivered to the Corinthian church, when they were united together in the fellowship of the gospel. Owing to the influence of remaining depravity, however, the original design and spiritual nature of this sacred feast, were in danger of being forgotten. It became the occasion of dividing the church into opposite parties, who eagerly contended with each other, so that their meeting together was more to their disadvantage than for edification. The end of this institution was thus entirely frustrated, which was to strengthen their faith, and to cherish mutual affection. The Apostle considered it his duty to interfere, to point out the impropriety of their conduct, and to correct their views respecting the nature of this ordinance. To this circumstance we are indebted for a more full account of the Lord’s supper, than might otherwise have been afforded. Let us attend to his directions with deep reverence. 17. “Now, in this which I declare, (*νῦν παραγγέλλω*, in declaring this) I do not praise you, that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse.” He was always happy to commend them, wherever he could do so consistently with faithfulness: but in what he was about to say, it was impossible for him to use the language of commendation, which would indeed be to flatter and deceive their souls. Instead of

meeting for their mutual improvement, their assembling together as a church, seemed to have a deteriorating influence on their character. 18. "For, in the first place," he adds, "when ye meet together in the church, (*ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*) I hear that there are divisions (*σχίσματα*) among you, and I believe it in part, (*μερὸς τι*)." Some have maintained that the word *ἐκκλησία*, *church*, is here applied to the house or building in which the Corinthians met; and they argue, that in verse 22, it is evidently opposed to the private houses of the members. It is not probable, however, that this name was applied to places of public worship at so early a period, especially when we consider that the primitive christians frequently met in private houses, or in public schools, hired for the purpose. The English word "church," indeed, which is a corruption of *κυρίου οἶκος*, is less objectionable than *ἐκκλησία*, as applied to the place of meeting. In Acts xi. 26. the same phrase is rendered "with the church:" here it simply signifies, when ye come together in the *congregation*, that is, in a church capacity, which decides nothing respecting the building. It is evident from ver. 20, that the church at Corinth consisted of only one assembly, and met together in one place: but though they had not actually separated from communion with each other, there was only the semblance of unity; for the Apostle was well informed, that there were many scandalous divisions or schisms among them, which was greatly to the dishonour of the Gospel, and quite inconsistent with the purposes of their meeting. With respect to a *part* of them at least, he had reason to fear that such reports were too well-founded. None indeed had yet withdrawn from the church on this account; but the breach would soon become wider, till the most dangerous errors and disorderly practices were broached and defended: The formation of different sects would be the consequence. 19. "For there must (*θα*) also be *heresies αἵρεσις* among you, that the approved (*δοκιμοί*) may be made manifest among you." It is evident that the word *αἵρεσις*, *heresy*, is here spoken of as something more pernicious than *σχίσμα*, *schism*; or rather, the latter is viewed as giving rise to the former. Schism is applied to parties in the same church, where no open separation is made, and no particular error is entertained. Heresy, again, seems to refer to the case of those who embrace some serious error or defend some disorderly practice, and who, when called to renounce the same, wilfully separate from the communion of

the church, and form themselves into a distinct party. It is used for a religious sect, in an unfavourable sense, Acts xxiv. 14. "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call *heresy*, so worship I the God of my fathers." It has the same meaning, chap. xxviii. 22. "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect, (*heresy*) we know that every where it is spoken against." The Apostle enumerates heresies among the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 20., and requires Titus to reject "heretical persons," after previous admonition, chap. iii. 10. It must needs be that such offences come; they are the natural consequence of the pride and depravity of man; and though greatly to be deplored, they are overruled ultimately for the good of the church; they serve the purpose of a *winnowing fan*, to separate the chaff from the wheat—they unite the faithful more closely together—they try the strength of their principles, and bring their true character more fully to light, just as a rebellion in a kingdom *makes manifest who are loyal subjects*.

At present, they professed to assemble for the purpose of celebrating the death of Christ, in the solemn ordinance specially appointed for that end; but in consequence of the disorders that prevailed, their *eating together* could no longer be viewed as the observance of a religious institution, but as a mere secular feast. 20. "When ye come together, therefore, into one place (*ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ*) this is not to eat the Lord's supper, (*κυριακοῦ δεῖπνον*). The "breaking of bread" is here distinguished by an appropriate name, intimating that it is a spiritual feast, instituted by our Saviour, and proper for the Lord's day. The disciples at Corinth, instead of uniting together in a devout and orderly manner, in partaking of the symbols of the Saviour's body, introduced the customs of the heathen in their idolatrous entertainments. With *them* it was usual, as we have already seen, on public festivals, to partake of a public banquet. Each person brought his provision along with him, according to his rank; but the rich, instead of sharing their ample store with the poor, proceeded to gratify their own appetite, in a selfish and voluptuous manner. In *this way*, some enjoyed abundance, while others could scarcely obtain a sufficiency for their immediate use. Such a practice seems hardly reconcileable with our notions of Grecian politeness; but it is still more extraordinary, that a custom so unbecoming the nature of christian fellowship, should have been adopted by the Corinthian church.

But the best institutions are liable to corruption in the hands of men; and those who are most in reputation for *wisdom* are sometimes left to act in a very unaccountable manner. It is supposed by some, that the apostles introduced the practice of inviting the members of the churches to "feast together" in public, as a pledge of their mutual affection; and to these entertainments allusion seems to be made, Jude 12., under the title of *αγαπαι*, or *love feasts*. It may be also thought, that these repasts are referred to in Acts ii. 46. "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread (*κατ' οίκον*), from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." It is certain that this was a very ancient practice in the church, and that the feasts of charity continued to be observed, till they were suppressed on account of the abuses to which they gave rise. Whether they are referred to in this passage, or whether indeed they were of apostolic origin, is not so clearly ascertained; but it seems evident that the Corinthians had begun to eat together in their place of worship, as at a common entertainment. This feast they either confounded with the Lord's supper, or rather partook of *previously* to the administration of that ordinance. Perhaps they defended the practice, on the ground, that the original institution of the Eucharist was preceded by the pascal supper; and as the former was not intended as a full meal, they thought it necessary to make up the deficiency by some other means. Dr Mosheim gives the following account of these entertainments. "The prayers of the first christians were followed by *oblations* of bread, wine, and other things; and hence, both the ministers of the church, and the poor, derived their subsistence. Every christian who was in an opulent condition; and, indeed, every one according to their circumstances, brought with them their gifts, and offered them as it were unto the Lord. Of the bread and wine presented in these offerings, such a quantity was separated from the rest, as was required in the administration of the Lord's supper." "The holy supper was distributed by the deacons; and this sacred institution was followed by sober repasts, which, from the excellent ends they were designed to promote, were called *αγαπαι*, or feasts of charity."* If this were indeed the custom in well-regulated churches, it was very different in the church at Corinth. 21. "For in *eating* every one taketh before-hand (*προλαμβάνει*) his own sup-

* Eccles. Hist. part. 1. cent. 2. c. 4. § 7.

per ;" that is, every one first partook of the provisions he had brought, before the administration of the Lord's supper. This unfitted their minds for attending rightly to that holy ordinance ; and, according to the selfish practice before alluded to, one person was allowed to *want*, while another gratified his appetite, without keeping strictly within the bounds of moderation. " This man hungers and another is filled (*μισθου*). " There is no necessity for rendering the word *μισθου*, *is drunken* ; for we cannot suppose that *intoxication* would be tolerated in any member of the primitive churches. It is here opposed, not to moderate *eating*, but to *hunger*. In John ii. 10. it is rendered " well drank," and the same word is used by the LXX. in Ps. xxxvi. 8. where it evidently refers to eating, " They shall be abundantly satisfied (*μισθουσιν*) with the fatness of thy house." Accordingly, the passage is rendered by Schleusner, "*Alius quidem esurit et sitiit, alius vero saturatur.*" The usual version is retained by some commentators, to shew that even the primitive churches were not *faultless* ; but surely we are not at liberty to copy their defects. Even allowing the correctness of the received translation, it would only prove that the Apostle mentions their excesses in order to condemn them. It is paraphrased by Dr McKnight, " another is plentifully fed." This method of feasting was utterly subversive of the design of the ordinance of the Supper. It was never intended for the gratification of the carnal appetite, but for the edification of the soul ; consequently, only as much of the elements should be used by each person, as may be necessary to assist the mind in meditating on the spiritual blessings signified. The house of prayer must not be converted into a place of sensual enjoyment. Therefore the Apostle further asks, 22. " What ! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in, or do ye despise (*καταφρονετε*) the church of God, and shame them that have nothing (*κατασχυντε τους μη ιχοντας*) ? " If they wished to satisfy their appetite, they had houses of their own for this purpose, in which they might eat and drink with their friends. Did they not perceive, that, by their present disorderly conduct, they were despising the institutions of God's house, and rendering the table of the Lord contemptible ? Nor was it less inconsistent with *brotherly love*. Was it not calculated to put their poorer brethren to shame, who had no provision of their own to bring along with them ? What should he say to them respecting such a practice ?

Could he commend their spirit, or hold them up as an example to other churches? This was impossible. "Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." Such a form of expression implies the strongest *disapprobation*.

In order to bring them back to the path of duty, he proceeds to explain the proper manner of celebrating the Lord's supper, as he had himself been instructed by divine revelation, and as he had taught the Corinthians before, if they had not presumptuously neglected his doctrine. He had not indeed been *present* at the original institution of that solemnity, but he had been fully instructed in its true nature and design, by our Lord himself; and the directions here laid down remarkably coincide with the account given by the four evangelists. 23. "For I have received from the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread (*ἄρτον*). On that memorable night in which the Son of God was delivered into the hands of sinful men, he was pleased to appoint a simple but solemn memorial of his sufferings and death, which might at once serve to establish the fact, and to confirm the faith and love of his disciples to the end of time, and which has always been viewed as a source of comfort and joy by the people of God. As he sat with the twelve at the passover table, he took a cake of unleavened bread, such as was commonly used on the occasion of the passover, and having given thanks to God for his goodness in the redemption of the world, he broke it, and distributed it among them, as the *symbol of his body*, which was shortly to be broken for their sins. 24. "And having given thanks (*εὐχαριστήσας*) he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." On this passage the Roman Catholics found their doctrine of transubstantiation, maintaining, that on pronouncing these words by the priest, the bread is converted into the real body of Christ. But the very occasion on which they were spoken, shews that they are not to be understood in a *literal* sense. Our Saviour was *personally* present with his disciples when he said these words; so that they could not partake of that body in which he addressed them. Besides, his body was not yet broken for them: that event was still future. We cannot conceive of a substance being changed, where its *visible qualities* remain as before. When the water was changed into wine, there was an *actual* transforma-

tion submitted to the senses; but here we are required to believe a miracle, *contrary* to the evidence of our senses, which is the true way to bring the doctrine of miracles into disrepute. We cannot suppose a body to be at once present and absent in the same place; but the heavens have received the body of the heavenly Saviour till the times of the restitution of all things. When he spoke of giving men his flesh to eat, the Jews understood him *literally*; but he taught them, that "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," (John vi. 63.) Therefore, when he says, "this is my body," he must be understood to mean, "this represents my body broken for you;" and he commands us to take and eat the *bread* as a memorial of his infinite goodness, in giving his sacred flesh to be the food of our souls. As the body is nourished with the bread that perisheth, so we must feed on him by faith as the bread of life.* 25. "In the same manner (he took) the cup after they had supped (*μετα το δειπνον*), saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." According to the view formerly given, the cup of wine is an emblem of the Saviour's blood, by the shedding of which the covenant of grace is ratified, and remission of sins obtained. So in Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. he says, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." By mentioning that our Lord took the cup *after the pascal supper*, the Apostle intimates to the Corinthians that the Lord's supper is not designed for the gratification of the bodily appetite. By means of this ordinance, the followers of Christ *proclaim* the fact and the design of his death, to the world, and profess their faith in his second coming. 26. "For as often (*ιναυτως*) as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye declare, or publish (*κηρυττετε*) the death of the Lord until he come." Those persons, therefore, who should partake of these symbols, merely to gratify their carnal appetite, or who should abuse them to purposes of strife, or profane them for secular ends, are chargeable with treating the sacred body of Christ with contempt, and must share in the guilt of those who crucified the Lord of glory, (Heb. vi. 6.) They also treat the

* We should understand the words, *αυτον τω σπινι αναμνησκειν*, as signifying "to put me in remembrance;" for in this ordinance we, as it were, remind the Saviour of the great love wherewith he loved us.

eating and drinking their own condemnation, who are most afraid of it. But the presumptuous sinner, who profanes this ordinance, by sitting down at the sacred table in an impenitent state, ought seriously to consider this passage: he may not be visited with miraculous judgments in this life, but he invites severer vengeance on himself in the day of condemnation. But the Apostle chiefly refers to temporal judgments; therefore he adds, 30. "For this cause many among you are weak and infirm (*αἰσχροί*) and a considerable number (*πολλοί*, sufficiently many) have fallen asleep." It would seem that an unusual mortality then prevailed in the church, which the Apostle ascribes to the divine displeasure on account of their abuse of the Lord's supper; but he expresses himself favourably respecting even those who had died. To *fall asleep*, is generally applied to the death of saints. He observes, at the same time, that if christians would only be faithful in scrutinizing themselves they would escape the judgments of God. 31. "For if we would judge (*δικαζόμενοι*) ourselves, we should not be judged." M'Knight paraphrases this verse, "But if we would make a difference in ourselves, by eating the Lord's supper with dispositions different from those with which we eat a common meal, we should not be disapproved." This is no doubt a truth, but the Apostle seems to refer to a more general examination of our character and principles. Yet, in the case of believers, even temporal judgments are mercifully intended to awaken them from their spiritual slumber, and to quicken their diligence, so that they may not be involved in the condemnation of the ungodly. 32. "But when we are judged; we are chastened or corrected (*καταδικάζονται*) by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." He exhorts them, therefore, when assembling for the celebration of the Lord's supper, to wait for each other in an orderly manner, that they might all partake at one time, and to receive each other in a cordial and brotherly way to this feast of love. 33, 34. "Wherefore my brethren, when coming together to eat, receive, or wait for one another, (*ἀλλήλους*); and if any man hunger let him eat at home, that ye come not together to condemnation." Let no one suppose that this holy ordinance is designed for the gratification of the bodily appetite, or that the house appropriated to prayer, is the proper place for satisfying hunger. At the same time, the Apostle did not require the communicants to receive the Lord's supper fasting, according to the

superstitious practice of the church of Rome. He allows them by all means to appease their hunger in *their private houses*, before coming together to break bread. Finally, he promises to rectify other disorders of a less serious nature, when he should be permitted to visit them in person. "Other things I will arrange (*διατάξωμαι*) when I come."

REFLECTIONS.

1. This passage of scripture exposes certain prevailing errors and abuses relative to the Lord's supper. (1.) We have already seen, that it gives no countenance to the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation. The symbol of our Saviour's body is still called *bread*, after consecration, that is, after the words of institution are pronounced, "as oft as ye eat this bread," "whosoever shall eat this bread unworthily," "so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup," &c. The Roman Catholics contend that the expressions, "guilty of the body," "not discerning the body," &c. demonstrate the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, even to the unworthy communicant. But nothing is more common than to use the sign for the thing signified, and the contrary; we have shewn that the words *καὶ διακρίνον* properly signify, *not making a difference* between the sacred symbols and a common meal. This doctrine was unknown to the primitive church, and was not maintained by the church of Rome till the fourth council of Lateran, held by Innocent the III. in the 13th century. It has given rise to much idolatry and superstition. The Lord's supper, instead of being viewed as a commemorative festival, has been converted into a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead, which is supposed to be offered up by the priest. Thus the doctrine of Scripture is set aside, "that by one offering up of himself, the Saviour has perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. vii. 27.; ix. 28.; x. 10, 12. The testimony of the senses is contradicted, and the blinded multitude are taught to adore a created substance as God, to the scandal of Jews and infidels, and the great dishonour of the Christian religion.

(2.) We learn the impropriety of withholding the communion cup from the laity. Both elements are to be used by the faithful. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood;"—"this do

ye, as oft as *ye* drink it, in remembrance of me ;"—“As often as ye eat this bread *and* drink this cup ;”—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, *and* drink of the cup : for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth *and* drinketh judgment to himself,” verses 25, 26, 28, 29. No language could be more explicit than this. Referring to the words, “drink of the cup,” the Roman Catholics say, “This is not said by way of command, but by way of allowance: viz. where and when it is agreeable to the practice and discipline of the church.” But where did they learn this distinction? or how can they plead that their’s is the true apostolic church, if they set aside the practice and discipline established by the apostles? To withhold the cup from the people, is a gross usurpation, to increase the influence of the priesthood. They accuse us of corrupting the 27th verse, by rendering the particle *and* ; and it is readily allowed, that the preferable translation would be, “whosoever shall eat this bread, *or* drink the cup of the Lord unworthily,” &c. ; but this makes no difference in the sense. The meaning evidently is, that it is dangerous to partake of *either* of the elements, in an unworthy manner ; and one passage must not be explained in opposition to others abundantly clear.

(3.) We learn that the Lord’s supper is a social ordinance, and therefore we have no authority for administering it in private houses, to sick persons. The church is represented as “coming together into one place to eat ;” and the members are commanded to “tarry one for another,” verses 20, 33. The nature of the ordinance requires this. It represents the union of believers with Christ, and with each other, as *one body*. It was, no doubt, an ancient practice, to send portions of the elements to sick persons ; but this seems to have originated in a mistaken view of the efficacy of the *outward symbols* to convey grace.

(4.) We learn the permanent obligation of this ordinance, in opposition to the opinion of the Quakers. We are thus to shew forth the Lord’s death “until he come,” verse 26. They say, till he come “to illuminate the church by his Spirit, and to deliver her from carnal ordinances.” But this was the *actual state* of the church, in the apostolic age. She enjoyed a plenitude of spiritual gifts, and was delivered from the yoke of ceremonial observances. Yet the apostles enjoined on *this church*, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper.

(5.) This passage of Scripture seems to disapprove the practice of communicating, in separate companies, at successive tables. The members of the church at Corinth are commanded to wait for each other; and a church should consist only of as many as can conveniently celebrate the ordinance at one time. The contrary practice gives no just representation of the *fellowship* of the members, as united in one body under Christ, their head; but it is a consequence of the *indiscriminate admission* of members into the church, which occasions great multitudes to press forward to the Lord's table.

(6.) It proves the frequency with which this ordinance was administered in the primitive churches. The Lord's supper formed a part of their ordinary worship, "on the first day of the week." This is well known to have been the prevailing custom for the first three centuries. The Apostle speaks of the Corinthians coming together *to eat*, verse 33.; and he informs them, that in consequence of their disorderly conduct, their coming together into one place was not to eat the Lord's supper, ver. 20.; plainly intimating that this was their *main design* in assembling. Now from chap. xvi. 2. we learn that they usually met on the first day of the week. In Acts ii. 42. the disciples at Jerusalem are said to have continued steadfastly, or constant, in the breaking of bread; and in Acts xx. 7. the disciples at Troas are said to have "met together on the first day of the week, to break bread," where there is nothing said to shew that this was an *extraordinary* occasion. Infrequent communicating was the consequence of that general decay of religion in the church, which took place in the 4th century, under Constantine; and we meet with many canons of councils to *enforce* frequent communicating, after that period. It may be useful to quote a few passages from ancient authors on this subject; and in doing so, I shall avail myself of an excellent pamphlet in defence of weekly communion, by the late Dr John Erskine, minister of the Greyfriar's church, Edinburgh. "Pliny, in his epistle to the Emperor Trajan, wrote about the year of Christ 110, which was only six years after the death of the Evangelist St John, acquaints the emperor, that he had found nothing to allege against the christians, but their obstinacy in their superstition; and that it was their custom to meet together on a set day before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by the sacrament (*sacramento*) that

they would commit no wickedness."—Justin Martyr, who wrote A. D. 155, is another witness.—"On the day," says he, "that is called Sunday, all the christians meet together, because that is the day of the Saviour's resurrection; and then we have read to us the writings of the prophets and apostles. This done, the president makes a speech, exhorting the people to practise what they have heard. Then we all join in prayer. Then bread, wine, and water, are brought forth; and the president having again poured out prayers and praises to God, there is a distribution and communication of the sacramental elements. Last of all, those that are willing and able, contribute what they think fit for relief of the indigent."—Tertullian, who lived about A. D. 200, takes notice of some who declined receiving the sacrament on the stationary days (Wednesdays and Fridays), for fear of breaking their fast, and blames them for this as a foolish scruple." This passage not only proves that he thought it a duty incumbent on the faithful, to communicate as often as possible, but that it was then a common practice to communicate on other days as well as Sundays. Minutius Felix, who flourished A. D. 230, speaks of the christians assembling to eat on a solemn day. Cyprian (A. D. 250) tells us that daily communions were the common practice of his time. And Fortunatus, his contemporary, made use of the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, as an argument for communicating daily. Victorinus Petavionensis (A. D. 290.) tells us that it was usual, on the Lord's day, to receive the sacrament. Basil, about the year 372, recommends communicating every day, and informs us that it was the practice of the church of Cæsarea, where he was, to celebrate the sacrament four times a-week, viz. on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who was contemporary with Basil, or whoever is author of the tract in his works, *De Sacramentis*, justly blames the infrequent use of the sacrament among the Greeks, where some communicated only once a-year, and seems to intimate that daily communions were in use at Milan," &c. Dr Erskine's pamphlet was published in 1749, in consequence of an overture of the presbytery and synod of Glasgow, that the Lord's supper should be administered more frequently than had been customary, in the national church. The late Mr Randall, minister of Stirling, wrote on the same occasion, in defence of weekly communion. Among other authorities, he adduces the testimony of Calvin, in

his Christian Institutes, who, after proving that this was the practice of the primitive church, by a reference to Scripture, and to the opinions of the early fathers, speaks in strong language against the practice of communicating once a-year. Alluding to this, he says, "*Et sane hæc consuetudo quæ semel quotannis communicare jubet certissimum, est diaboli inventum, cujuscumque tandem ministerio invecata fuerit.*" Then, after referring to a prudential regulation of Zepherinus, which had been unfairly urged in defence of the practice, he says, "*qua factum est ut fere omnes, quum semel communicaverunt, quasi in reliquum anni tempus pulchre defuncti in utramque aurem securi dormiant. Longe aliter factum oportuit; singulis ad minimum hebdomadibus proponenda, erat christianorum cætui mensa Domini; declarandæ promissiones quæ nos in ea spiritualiter pascere; nullus quidem necessitate cogendus, sed cohortandi omnes et stimulandi; objurgandus etiam ignavorum torpor. Omnes gregatim ut famelici ad tales lautitias convenirent. Non injuria igitur principio conquestus sum, diaboli arte intrusam hanc consuetudinem, quæ dum unum anni diem præscribit, in totum annum secordes reddit.* (*Institutiones*, b. 4. c. 17. § 46.) These passages are thus translated by Mr Randall. "And truly, this custom of appointing men to communicate once yearly, is without all doubt a contrivance of the devil, whoever was the instrument of introducing it."—"For hereby it hath happened, that the most part, when they have once communicated, think themselves fairly discharged for the rest of the year, and become secure and careless; but it ought to be far otherwise done. Every Lord's day, his table should be spread in the church, and the promises on which they should feed, be declared; and though none should be constrained, yet all should be exhorted and excited, and the slothful chid for their backwardness, that the whole hungry multitude may be gathered in one body to this pleasant repast. I therefore did not unjustly complain, that that custom was of Satan's contrivance, which, appointing this ordinance once a-year, throws into supine negligence all the rest of it."

(7.) Of course, if this ordinance ought to form part of the usual worship of the church on the Lord's day, there is no room for those days of fasting, preparation, and thanksgiving which have been appended to it in some Christian communities. Self-examination is, no doubt, an important duty, in attending to this institution, but this should be our daily practice.—Why should

this fear of love be surrounded with ceremonies, which invest it with an air of mystery, and seem to terrify the conscience of the weak? No scriptural reason can be given for this practice, which the *necessity of the times* introduced, and *custom* retains. But carelessness and formality are no less injurious than superstitious fear.

(8.) We see the impropriety of making this sacred rite a test of political opinions. It were to be wished, that some other method were adopted by government, for qualifying persons for official situations, than requiring them to receive the sacrament in the established church. Thus the ordinance is profaned *by law*, and much guilt entailed on the nation.

2. We learn, that abuses in the church ought to be *rectified*, and the institutions of Christ *restored* to their proper authority and form. This the Apostle enjoins on the church at Corinth, with reference to the Lord's supper, and the same principle is applicable to every other disorder.

3. Improper persons, who are in danger of eating and drinking unworthily, ought to be excluded from this sacred ordinance. Those only who are capable of examining themselves of their faith in Christ, are qualified to receive it. Such is the doctrine of the Westminster divines, in the Shorter Catechism: "It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves," (Ques. 97.) The same truth is taught in the Confession of Faith: "All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, OR BE ADMITTED THEREUNTO."

4. The observance of this ordinance is a duty binding on all christians. It is not a matter of *convenience* or *choice*, whether they shall partake of it or not: yet how many are there who theoretically allow its obligation, who live, notwithstanding, in the habitual neglect of it. If to eat and drink unworthily, endangers our salvation, much more are we guilty, if we do not eat and drink at all. Professing christians, who disobey the commands of Christ, must expect to be condemned with the world.

5. In chastening his people for their sins, the Lord consults their spiritual good. We do not know but temporal diseases may even yet be the effect of presumptuous sin. Let us then impartially judge ourselves, so we shall not be condemned. The reader may consult, on the subject of this lecture, an excellent Treatise on the Lord's Supper, lately published by the Rev. W. Orme, of Camberwell.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—11.

OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

THE primitive churches were furnished with a great variety of supernatural *gifts*, by which they were built up in faith and holiness, and the want of the apostolic writings was supplied. These gifts were originally conferred on the apostles on the day of pentecost, when the Spirit descended, and sat upon each of them, "and the disciples began to speak with new tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Of these endowments, the most splendid was the gift of tongues. The power of working miracles was also conferred, together with the ability of prophesying, or of teaching by supernatural illumination. These gifts were intended for the conviction of unbelievers, and produced great impression on those who witnessed them, Acts ii. 7—12 ; viii. 13. The same powers were communicated to the new converts, *by the laying on of the apostles' hands*. (Acts viii. 17.) Of these endowments, the church at Corinth enjoyed a large share, as we learn from chap. i. 5. They were not, indeed, indiscriminately be-

stowed on *all the members*, as is evident from the 30th verse of this chapter ; but a considerable number of individuals, of both sexes, were miraculously inspired. The spiritual persons were in danger, however, of being unduly elated with a vain conceit of their abilities, and of despising those who were less distinguished than themselves. The Apostle, it would appear, had heard of these abuses, and proceeds in this, and the 14th chapter, to shew the design of these spiritual gifts, and the proper manner in which they ought to be exercised. 1. " Now, concerning the spiritual (gifts) (*πρὸς τοὺς πνευματικαίς*) brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant." He wished them to consider the true source and grand intention of these qualifications ; that they were derived from the Father of lights, and must be employed, not for their personal gratification merely, but for his glory. He reminds them of their original state and character, when they were living in heathen darkness, without God, and without hope. 2. " Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away (*ἀπαγαμένοις*) to these dumb idols, even as ye were led, (*ἡγεθῆς*). " At that time they bowed down to images of gold and silver, of wood or stone, the work of men's hands, which could neither hear the prayers presented to them, nor answer their deluded votaries. To these idols they were attached, without any rational ground of preference, as they happened to be led by the craft of priests—the force of education and habit—by their own wayward inclinations, or by the subtilty of Satan, the god of this world. Thus they followed, without examination, the system received by tradition from their fathers. By styling the former objects of their worship *dumb* idols, the Apostle intimates that the heathen deities were utterly incapable of conferring such a noble gift as that of *tongues* ; and that the pretended oracles had nothing of the nature of true prophecy : they were the inventions of artful men, not the responses of senseless idols. The reflection on their former situation ought to humble them, as well as to convince them, that their present gifts were entirely the work of God, and not the fruit of their own natural abilities. He would therefore have them to observe, that no person pretending to inspiration could speak dishonourably of our blessed Lord, as if he had been *justly* condemned and put to death as a deceiver. 3. " Wherefore, I inform you, (*γινώριζω*) that no one speaking by (*ἐν*) the Spirit of God, calleth (*καλεῖται*, *προ-σκαλεῖται*—Macknight) Jesus accursed (*καταθεμα*) ; and no one can

say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." The Spirit was given for the very purpose of glorifying Christ, by exhibiting the dignity of his person, and the value and suitableness of his atonement: and as the Son and Spirit are one in counsel and in essence, their testimony cannot disagree, nor can their doctrine contradict itself. No inspired teacher could therefore pronounce the blessed Jesus a person justly *devoted to destruction*. The Apostle seems here to allude to the impious practice of the unbelieving Jews, who pronounced curses and execrations on the memory of the blessed Jesus, and carried their hatred of his name so far, as to compel the christians to blaspheme. Such was the practice of the Apostle himself before his conversion, 1 Tim. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 11. In like manner the persecuting heathen endeavoured to corrupt the followers of Christ. Thus Pliny, in his Epistle to Trajan, says, "*Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens, qui negant se esse christianos aut fuisse; cum præeunte me Deos appellarent et imagini tuæ (quam propter hoc jusseram, cum simulacris numinum afferri,) thure ac vino supplicarent; præterea male-dicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt re vera christiani.*"—"A libel was laid before me, without a name, containing the names of many (persons accused). These denied that they were christians now, or had been. By my direction they called upon the gods, and supplicated, with wine and incense, your image, (which I had ordered to be brought, with the images of the gods, for that purpose)—moreover they *cursed Christ*. None of which things, it is said, can any of those who are truly christians be compelled to do." At the same time, some of the unbelieving Jews pretended to act under divine influence, as exorcists, (Acts xix. 13.) and the heathen priests affected to be *inspired* by their deities. But these pretensions were utterly vain. It is further to be observed, that no spiritual teacher could preach Jesus as the Son of God—the Lord from heaven, but by the influence of the divine Spirit. This was the grand stumbling-block to the Jews—that the christians should acknowledge, as their supreme Lord, one who had been ignominiously put to death; this, too, made the Gospel appear as foolishness even to the idolatrous Greeks. And the doctrine of our Saviour's deity is still considered a hard saying, by those who set up their own fallible reason, against the plain dictates of the oracles of truth. It may even be doubted, whether a man can truly understand and believe this mystery

without divine teaching. He may, in a general way, *assent* to the truth of it; but this is quite a different thing from having such a view of the infinite evil of sin—of the depravity of man—the holiness of God, and the spirituality and rectitude of his law, as to perceive the necessity of an atonement, by one who is truly God in our nature.

The Apostle further observes, that, notwithstanding the variety of the spiritual gifts bestowed on the churches, they all proceeded from one divine Spirit, and were conferred, through the One Mediator, to the glory of the same God. 4—6. “Now there are diversities of gifts (*διαίρεσις χαρισμάτων*) but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, (*διακονίαι*) but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, (*εργασματα*) but it is the same God who worketh all in all, (*παντα εν αλλω*).” The inspired teachers ought not therefore to be elated, or dissatisfied with their endowments, or to despise one another, but to consider themselves merely as instruments in the hand of God, who had nothing but what they had received. The spiritual *gifts* or qualifications are represented as bestowed by the *Spirit*—the *offices* or services for which they were given, as instituted by *Christ*, the Lawgiver and Head of his church, (Ps. lxxviii. 18.) and the *operations* or effects produced by the exercise of these *gifts*, as the work of the *Father*, who, by his powerful energy, thus set his seal to the truth and excellence of the Gospel. To *Him* all their qualifications are ultimately to be referred in every case. “He produces every gift in every individual.” The variation of titles here is very remarkable, and evidently proves the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, (*Πνευμα, Κυριος, Θεος*) distinct in operation, yet one in essence and in counsel. Or, if this should be considered a *strained* interpretation, the passage establishes, in a still stronger manner, the proper deity of the Holy Spirit. A similar instance occurs Ephes. iv. 4, 6. “There is one body and one *Spirit*, even as ye are called into one hope of your calling: One *Lord*, one faith, one baptism, one *God* and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, by which his presence and power are made manifest, were not, however, given to promote private ends, such as vanity, ostentation, or self-interest, but for the advantage of the church of God. 7. “But the *manifestation* (*φανέρωσις*) of the Spirit is given to every one for pro-

sitting (πρὸς τοὺς ἐνυμφεύον),” that is, for the general benefit. Hence the manifold variety of these gifts, to meet the various exigencies of the church, according to the nature of the case. 8—10. “For to one indeed is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom (λογὸς σοφίας), to another the word of knowledge (λογὸς γνώσεως) according to (κατὰ) the same Spirit—to another faith by the same Spirit—to another the gifts of healings (χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων) by the same Spirit—to another the workings of miracles (δυνάμειν, of powers)—to another prophecy—to another the discernings of spirits (διακρίσεις πνευμάτων)—to another (different) kinds of tongues (γλῶσσαι γλῶσσων)—to another the interpretation of tongues (ἑρμηνεία γλῶσσων.”) The various shades of difference in the spiritual gifts here enumerated, it may now be almost impossible to ascertain, though they were doubtless well understood at the time when this Epistle was written.* One person enjoyed a superior degree of insight into the scheme of redemption, which is called the *wisdom* of God, so as to be able to exhibit it in all its bearings, and to illustrate the suitableness and excellence of the Gospel. He was also enabled to discriminate the various characters of men, to detect and confute errors, and to apply the word to the various exigencies of the hearers. This might be called “the word of wisdom,” which the apostles possessed in an eminent measure. Another had a clear discovery of the scope of the various types and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and of the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, so as to be able to illustrate and establish the truth of Christianity from these, especially for the conviction of the Jews. This may be considered as “the word of knowledge.” Another was endowed, by the same Spirit, with supernatural *faith* in the power and presence of God, which enabled him to triumph over every danger, and difficulty, and to perform the most astonishing works. Of this faith our Saviour speaks, (Matt. xxi. 21.) It was by the exercise of this kind of faith that Peter and John healed the lame man, (Acts iii. 16.) and it is of *this* the Apostle speaks in the 13th chapter of *this* Epistle, verse 2. It is also true that the faith which justifies is the gift of the Spirit, (Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29, &c.); but the con-

* The extreme brevity with which such splendid endowments are enumerated is worthy of notice. An impostor would have made them the subject of lengthened declamation.

nection leads us to conclude that the faith of miracles is here spoken of. Another was enabled, by the same Spirit, "to heal" various kinds of diseases, by a word, for the confirmation of the Gospel, (Mark xvi. 17, 18. Acts v. 15.; xix. 11, 12, &c.) Others silenced the enemies of the faith, by inflicting miraculous judgments, by which was demonstrated the mighty power of God, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and of Elymas the sorcerer, (Acts v. 5, 10.; xiii. 11.) Or the expression, "the working of powers," may refer to the ability which the apostles possessed of conferring miraculous gifts on others by the laying on of their hands. This is the opinion of M'Knight. Some, by the gift of *prophecy*, were enabled to foretell future events, (Acts xi. 28.; xxi. 11.) or to speak, by immediate suggestion of the Spirit, for the edification of the church. In this last sense the word *προφητια* seems to be used chap. xiv. Others, by the gift of *discerning spirits*, possessed an extraordinary insight into human character, (Acts v. 3.; viii. 23.; xiii. 10.) Thus Peter detected the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. By this means, they were also enabled to detect false teachers, and to point out proper persons for the office of the ministry, (chap. xiv. 29. 1 Tim. i. 18.) Others were qualified to speak, with ease and fluency, "in various kinds of foreign languages," which they at once acquired in a supernatural manner, (Acts ii. 8.; xiv. 18.): while to others belonged the office of *interpreting* the discourse so delivered, for the instruction of those who were ignorant of the language, (chap. xiv. 27.) 11. "All these, he adds, that one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing, separately, to every one as he pleases (*καθως βουλεται*)."
 These diversified gifts were the work of the same Divine Spirit, who, in the distribution of them, acted in a sovereign way, according to his own good pleasure, without being accountable to any man for the manner in which he exercised his own prerogative. Here the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit are strongly asserted: His *divinity*—for who could bestow such supernatural endowments but an Omnipotent Agent? His *personality*—Is he not represented as acting according to his own will? But volition is a personal act. As these gifts were imparted in a sovereign manner, no one had a right to complain of the particular kind of endowment conferred on him, or of the measure in which it was conferred. No one ought to be dissatisfied, if he were not thus distinguished; and no one ought to glory in these gifts, as if they were the fruit of his own application.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from this subject the truth of the Gospel history. Would the Apostle have ventured to refer to these gifts, with so much minuteness, in his letters to the churches, had no such miraculous endowments been conferred? Would not the Corinthians have confronted his assertion about the diversities of gifts, by a counter statement? Yet we meet with nothing of the kind. Would he have hazarded a declaration which, if untrue, could have been so easily refuted? Nothing is more improbable. The success of Christianity is thus accounted for. The preachers were furnished with sentiments—with language—with the power of working miracles—with the gift of prophecy—with a supernatural knowledge of human nature—with the gift of tongues, and the power of interpreting into various languages. To all this was added an invincible fortitude, springing from lively *faith* or confidence in God. Could they fail of success? But why did not all believe? This question has been already answered under chap. ii. Their enemies did not attempt to deny these miracles, but they ascribed them to inadequate and false causes.

2. Though supernatural gifts have now ceased, the absence of them is supplied by the holy Scriptures. Let these be diligently read by all the faithful. Why should the multitude be restricted from searching these heavenly records? We are told, that the church subsisted for some time without the aid of the New Testament writings; but she enjoyed the ministry of inspired men; and as soon as the apostolic writings could be collected, they were read publicly in all the churches. (*Paley's Evidences*, part i. chap. ix. sect. 5.)

3. A similar diversity is observable in the *ordinary* gifts now bestowed on the pastors of the church. Some excel in proving the inspiration of the Scriptures, and defending the faith against the attacks of infidelity. Others are distinguished by their success in illustrating the doctrines of the Gospel. Others excel in expounding the sacred text. Others in preaching experimentally, according to the different situations of professing christians. Others in arousing the careless. Others in comforting the afflicted. Shall we despise one man because he does not possess all these qualifications, or not acknowledge the sovereignty of that Spirit, who still divides to every one severally as he pleases?

4. Let us often reflect on our original character, when we were led away after lying vanities, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, being without Christ, and having no hope in the world. Such considerations are fitted to repress the vanity of our minds, and to teach us that we have nothing but what we have received.

“ Great was the day, the joy was great
When the inspir’d disciples met ;
Whilst on their heads the Spirit came,
And sat like tongues of cloven flame.
What gifts, what miracles he gave !
And power to kill and power to save !
Furnish’d their tongues with wond’rous words,
Instead of shields and spears and swords.”—WATTS.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—25.

THE CHURCH COMPARED TO THE HUMAN BODY.

THE Apostle had enumerated the various spiritual gifts bestowed on the primitive church, and had ascribed them all to the operation of the same divine agent—the Holy Spirit. There ought, therefore, to be no boasting on the part of those who possessed them. He further shews the importance of *love and unity* among the disciples of Christ, by a beautiful allegory, in which he compares the church to the human body. 12. “For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ,” that is, the church of Christ. This appears to have been a favourite figure with the Apostle. Writing to the Ephesians, he says of Christ, that “he is the head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love,” (chap. iv. 16.); so in writing to the Colossians, he speaks of those who do not hold the head, “from which all the body

by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," (chap. ii. 19. See also Rom. xii. 4, 5.) In the same manner, he here observes, that the wonderful structure of the body, consists of many different parts, or members, united into one frame, admirably adapted to their several uses, each conducing to the perfection and good of the whole, and animated by one living principle: Galen, the celebrated physician, is said to have been convinced of the existence of God, by examining the wonderful mechanism of the human frame. The reader will find an eloquent description of the various parts of the body in Cicero's work, *De Natura Deorum*, (lib. 2. § 56.) which he adduces as one proof of the being of God. The same argument is happily illustrated by Dr Paley in his *Treatise on Natural Theology*, (chap. ix—xvi.) Indeed, it has attracted the attention and admiration of reflecting minds in all ages. The psalmist observes, (Psa. cxxxix. 14—16.) "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." The church is here called *Christ*, as he is the head and source of life to the whole body. In another place the church is called, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all," (Eph. i. 23.) Now, the church or body of Christ consists of many distinct members, or individual believers, organized into one community, however various the talents they possess, or the stations they occupy. By the effusion of the Spirit, signified by the water of baptism, they have been all constituted into one society, sharing equal privileges, and subject to the same laws, whatever religion they may have formerly professed, or to whatever class of society they may belong. All former distinctions are merged in the glorious liberty of the Gospel, and all equally enjoy the honours and immunities of the children of God; 13. "for indeed by one Spirit (ἑν ᾧ πνεύματι) we all have been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen, (ἡμεῖς δούλοι καὶ ἐλευθέροι), and have been all made to drink (ἐποτίσθημεν) into one spirit." The external ordinances of the gospel, are thus designed to exhibit the *unity* of the church. All the faithful are baptized with the Holy Ghost, which is shed on them abundantly through Jesus Christ their Saviour, (Titus iii. 6.) Thus they "have all imbibed the

same spirit," as the baptized person may be said to drink in the baptismal water poured upon him. This divine Spirit is in them "as a well of water springing up to everlasting life," (John iv. 14.) Some think, that, by the expression "we have all been made to drink into one spirit," the Apostle alludes to the members of the church drinking out of the same communion cup, as an emblem of their oneness of spirit: but I do not know that the cup in the Lord's supper is ever considered emblematical of the Spirit's influences, but always of the blood of Christ, and this last view introduces confusion into the figure, and rather obscures the sense. The latter clause seems explanatory of the former. (See *Mr Ewing's Essay on Baptism*, p. 68.) To whatever nation the disciples of Christ may belong, or whatever may be their external condition in life, it is evident that they have all *drunk into one spirit*; their experience, their joys, trials, and conflicts, are nearly the same; their views and their dispositions remarkably coincide. A family likeness may easily be recognized among them: thus the collective church throughout the world, forms a holy brotherhood, and each member discovers a similarity between his own sentiments and those of his brethren. On some points their views may be different, but on all subjects of importance they are cordially *agreed*.

The shades of difference which subsist among them, do not destroy or impair the beauty of the church, but rather promote its purity and vigour: 14. "For the body is not one member but many." The same diversity is apparent in all the works of God; among the heavenly intelligences, there are thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; among the celestial bodies, one star differs from another in glory. In the various tribes of plants and animals, we behold an astonishing diversity of form, and different capacities of enjoyment. In the human species there are many varieties, as to appearance, language, manners, abilities, taste, and pursuits. The wisdom of Providence is displayed in the mutual subservience of each member of the community to the good of the whole, and the amount of happiness produced by the combination of talent and of energy. This gives strength and beauty to the social system, and calls forth the peculiar faculties and powers of each individual. In the same manner, in the church there are different office-bearers, diversities of natural talent among the members, and of acquired knowledge and ex-

cellence, constitutional tendencies, prejudices of education, custom and habit, differences of age, of condition, and of temper. Does this imply imperfection? not in all cases: Is it injurious? It rather exhibits, as in the various parts of the corporeal frame, the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

2. No member of the body is useless or superfluous. Each has its appropriate function which cannot be performed by others. 15, 16. "If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it on this account (*παρὰ τοῦτο*) not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it on that account not of the body?" Here the Apostle, by a bold figure, personifies the members of the human body, and supposes that they were individually possessed of consciousness and the power of speech; that those which are inferior should be dissatisfied with their situation and use, and refuse any longer to contribute their share for the general good: that the foot, for example, should complain that it had not the skill and dexterity of the hand; or the ear, that it had not the quick perception and beautiful form of the eye. Were these members, on this account, no constituent parts of the body? Would such a conclusion be reasonable or just? certainly not. All are useful in their place, and none can be dispensed with. It is the foot which conveys the body from place to place, where the labour of the hand is required; and by the ear, not only is almost all instruction communicated, but warning is given of danger, where the eye would be utterly useless, namely, in the darkness of the night. By this organ, too, all the variety of sound is conveyed. He that formed the eye, planted the ear; and both evince his goodness and his power. It was by an allegory of a similar nature that Menenius Agrippa convinced the Roman people of their folly in withdrawing from the state, on account of the appointment of a Dictator. This is beautifully narrated by Livy (Book 2. sect. 32.)

3. The Apostle observes, that this variety of members is necessary to the perfection of the body. 17. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing; and if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" How superior is an organic structure to a shapeless mass! How inferior a stone, or a block of wood, for instance, to a plant, a beast, or a man! Whence the difference? Because there is an unvaried sameness in the one, and a well proportioned frame in the other. So also, harmony arises from the

combination of sounds, language from that of words. To have fewer senses than we have, or more of one kind, would imply imperfection, and not superior beauty or capacity, as in the case of monsters, or idiots, or of the blind, the dumb, or the lame. Each sense affords a peculiar gratification, and the use of all is necessary to the happiness of the man. Without difference of talent, taste and pursuit, society would lose its vigour, and become insipid; all improvement would be at an end. It would retrograde to its original state of savagism. So in the church, without this variety, all its comeliness would be defaced. If all possessed the same sentiments, gifts, and dispositions, where would be the advantage of their union, or the opportunity for the exercise of mutual forbearance and love? There would be none to relieve, none to sympathise or to bear with, none to forgive, and none to be supported and comforted.

4. This arrangement is the effect of *divine wisdom and sovereignty*: 18. "But now hath God placed (*ἔθηκε*) the members, each one of them in the body, as he hath pleased (*ἡθέλησεν*)."
He knows our frame, and having formed the various members, gives them that situation which is best adapted to their respective uses, as the artist, in erecting a structure, arranges the materials according to the plan he has laid down. The great Former of the church is acquainted with the peculiar capacity and disposition of each member, and has so appointed their lot, as to secure the successful development of these. So in civil society, he has, for wise purposes, made both rich and poor, and distributed various degrees of happiness. 19, 21. "But if all were one member, where were the body?" It could no longer perform its functions, or exhibit the wisdom and goodness of God. "But now indeed are there many members, yet but one body." The very supposition of an organic structure implies a variety of parts, but the multiplicity of these does not destroy the unity of our frame. No member of the body, however excellent, can dispense with the assistance of those that are inferior. "And the eye cannot say to the hand: I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you." As, therefore, no member of the church should withhold his proper aid, because he cannot perform every function, or may consider his office as inferior to that of others, according to what the Apostle had said before (ver. 15, 16.) so none should

despise the gifts of another, as if the inferior members were either unnecessary or unimportant.

5. The advantage of the feeble and uncomely members: 22. "Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more weak (ασθενέστερα) are necessary." By the "more feeble members," appear to be meant the veins, nerves, lungs, intestines, &c. These, though easily liable to disorder, are of the utmost consequence in the general system, and their vigorous exercise is absolutely necessary to the health of the body. Some connect the words πολλὰ μάλλον, *much more*, with ἀναγκαῖα, *necessary*, but the sense is the same. There are other members which are esteemed less honourable, but on which an artificial comeliness is conferred by the ornament of dress. 23, 24. "And those members of the body which we think less honourable (ατιμωτέρα), on these we throw around (περιτιθίμεν) more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts (ασχημονα) have more abundant comeliness. For our comely members have no need. But God hath tempered the body, (συνεκρίσας, he hath mixed it together, as clay is tempered by the potter,) having given more abundant honour to that which is deficient," (ὥς ἵσθουσιν.) In like manner, in the church, some are *feeble*, by being weak in the faith, or depressed in spirit, or poor and afflicted. Let not these suppose they are without their use. They may serve the interests of the church by their humility, their meekness, patience, and cheerful submission to the will of Providence. They may promote the general good, by their holy example and fervent prayers. The common soldier is highly necessary in an army.

Some individuals, again, are *less comely*, on account of the violence of their temper, their levity or imprudence, their deficiency in gentleness and courtesy, arising chiefly from a want of knowledge of the world. Are these to be despised? are their infirmities to be exposed and magnified? No! the mantle of love must be thrown over their defects. The diamond is not less valued, though rough from the mine. Thus God has provided for the security and welfare of the meanest individual. And the end of this salutary admixture is, that the members may have but one interest, and, by mutually serving each other, may promote the perfection and happiness of the whole system. 25. "That (in short) there may be no rent or division (σχίσμα) in the body, but that the members may have the same care (μεριμνήσῃ το αὐτό) for one another."

REFLECTIONS.

1. Has God placed us in the situation which he sees to be best for us? Let us learn the duty of contentment with our lot, both in the church and in the world. Let us study to improve our own proper gifts, and to discharge the duties of our sphere, however humble, with faithfulness and diligence. Why should we envy the talents or the station of others? Or why should we be dissatisfied with the measure of enjoyment assigned us? He that is faithful in that which is least, shall be equally approved with him who is faithful in much. Superior gifts involve the deeper responsibility. Are we placed in situations of eminence? Let us not disparage our weaker brethren. Let us set a high value on their counsels and their prayers. Let us honour the members of Christ, however feeble or uncomely they appear to the view of the world.

2. How close the union that ought to subsist among the followers of Christ! Every church should exhibit a pattern of affection and sympathy. This will be more or less the case, where the members are baptized with the Holy Spirit, and have been made to drink into the mind of Christ. Nothing will be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each will esteem others better than himself. All things will be done without murmuring or disputing, and each will be ready to sacrifice his own pleasure and inclinations to the wishes of another. How different the principles on which the disciples of Christ act towards each other, from the cold and selfish spirit of the world; and how vain is it to expect the exhibition of this mutual love in any secular society! Let us pray for the revival of this heavenly Spirit in all the churches of the saints, and for this purpose, that the influences of the Holy Ghost may be richly shed upon them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Bless’d be the tie that binds
Our hearts in christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
 We pour our ardent pray'rs ;
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
 Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,
 Our mutual burdens bear ;
 And often for each other flows
 The sympathizing tear."

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 26—31.

THE DIFFERENT OFFICES IN THE CHURCH.

THE Apostle had compared the church of Christ to the human body, which consists of many members, adapted to various important uses, and mutually subservient to each other's welfare. None of them are superfluous, and all are to be cherished and honoured. He now refers to another point of resemblance, namely, the sympathy or common feeling which pervades the members of the natural body. 26. "And whether one member suffer, all the rest sympathise (*συμπασχει*) with it, or whether one member be honoured, (*δοξάζεται*) all the members rejoice with it (*συγχαρει*)." The other senses are confined to particular organs, but that of touch diffuses itself through every part of the body. This admirable contrivance is noticed by Cicero, in the passage formerly alluded to. "*Tactus autem toto corpore æquabiliter fusus est, ut omnes ictus, omnesque nimios et frigoris, et caloris, adpulsus sentire possimus.*" But the touch is spread equally through the whole body, that we may be able to feel every impression, and all excesses, both of cold and heat." (*De Nat. Deor.* b. 2. sect. 56.) In case of one member being injured by accident or disease, the sensation of pain is felt throughout the whole, and every attention is bestowed on the suffering member that may restore it to health and vigour. By this provision, instant warning is given of threatened violence. How desirable that the same feeling of sympathy should be displayed in a christian church! There are

many occasions when a member is called to *suffer*, when overcome by the violence of temptation, through the remaining depravity of his heart; when he mourns the loss of beloved relatives; when deprived of his earthly possessions by reverses of Providence; when bowed down under bodily affliction; when exposed to persecution or reproach, for the truth's sake. In these circumstances, how animating the face of a brother, how soothing the influence of christian friendship! Hence, in a parallel passage, we are commanded to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep," (Rom. xii. 15.) On this point the language of the apostle John is strong and pointed: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) Nor is the language of James less explicit: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed, be filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit?" (chap. ii. 15, 16.)

In the same manner, if one member of the natural body be *honoured* by peculiar beauty or comely apparel, no envy is felt by the rest, but all of them participate in its joy. Thus ought the members of the church to feel, when one of their brethren is favoured with extraordinary manifestations of divine grace, or is distinguished by eminent gifts, extensive usefulness, increasing reputation, and prosperity in the world, or is advanced to an office of responsibility and honour in the church. In such cases, envy and jealousy are too apt to spring up; but nothing can be more hurtful to the community. The good of one should be considered as the happiness of all.

The Apostle sums up the whole discourse, by observing, 27. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members individually (*εἰς μίαν*)." Let no one therefore, envy the talents, or underrate the usefulness of his brethren. How great the honour thus conferred upon christians! It is thought a high honour to be distantly related to a person of rank—much more to be a child of the family. David thought it a mark of great distinction to be a king's son-in-law, (1 Sam. xviii. 23.) But how inferior is this to the dignity here specified—to be members of *his* body who fills heaven and earth with his presence, who is the brightness of his Father's

when a member is called to *suffer*, when over-
 tolerance of temptation, through the remaining de-
 sistent; when he mourns the loss of beloved rela-
 tives of his earthly possessions by reverses of
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It comes up the whole doctrine, by observing, Of
 the body of Christ, and members individually in
 love, charity, sympathy, and unity. It is the same
 doctrine. How great the honour has suffered
 of it through the light of love, and charity, and
 of it with much more to be a child of the family
 of the world of great distinction to be a child of the
 of it (12.) The love of the church is the love of the
 of it, and the members of the body, and the love
 of it, and the members of the body, and the love

glory and the express image of his person—to be fellow-heirs with Christ Jesus—to be raised to sit together in heavenly places with him! Other relationships are soon dissolved—this is eternal and unchangeable; *these* cannot secure true happiness or confer genuine excellence—*this* lays a foundation for both. How intimate the union between the Saviour and his people! they are not merely members of the same society, but of the same mystical body, (Eph. v. 30.) In other places of scripture, the most striking figures are employed to illustrate this union. Is Christ compared to a bridegroom? the church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Is he compared to a foundation? they are lively stones built up in him. Does he call himself the true vine? they are the branches. Does not this intimate that all our spiritual life is derived from him? that we ought to have the same mind, interest and affection, and that all who are thus related should be distinguished for their mutual love and sympathy? How important the union of principle, and of heart, among the disciples of Christ! Every church should exhibit a practical illustration of this beautiful passage of scripture, to the world.

The Apostle had adverted to the different functions discharged by the members of the natural body. He now specifies some of those distinct offices which had been instituted for the benefit of the church. 28. "And these indeed (*καὶ οὗς μὲν*) God hath placed (*ἔθετο*) in the church, first apostles, secondly, prophets, thirdly, teachers (*διδασκαλούς*), then powers (*δυναμεις*), then gifts of healing (*χαρισματα ἰαμάτων*), helps (*αντιληψίς*), governments (*κυβερνήσεις*), different kinds of tongues, (*γίνη γλωσσῶν*)."
There is some difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of some of these offices, their specific differences, and relative importance; especially, whether they were all vested in distinct persons, or if several of them were exercised by the same individual. Nor is it clearly decided whether all the offices here enumerated were *extraordinary*, and connected with the possession of supernatural gifts, or if some of them were meant to be permanent in the church; whether they are enumerated according to their relative importance, and whether they answer to the classification of gifts in ver. 8, 9, 10. Dr M'Knight is of opinion that only the extraordinary office-bearers are here alluded to, who were possessed of miraculous gifts, and who were to be laid aside when these were withdrawn; and he supports his opinion by observing, that neither bishops nor deacons are mentioned in this list, who are the standing

ministers in the church. It is generally admitted that the *apostolic* office was extraordinary, and peculiar to the persons originally appointed,—to the apostles was given the *word of wisdom*, to enable them fully to explain the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and to settle the order of the church; they did not stand in a particular relation to any one society, though they no doubt felt a special interest in those that had been converted by them; they confirmed their testimony by miracles; it was necessary that they should have been eye-witnesses of the life and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; they were directly called by our Saviour, and in the appointment of Matthias, the great Head of the church was appealed to, by casting lots; to them, in a special manner, was entrusted the power of binding and loosing, that is, of declaring infallibly what was agreeable, or contrary, to the will of God, (Matt. xviii. 18.) It is evident that, in respect of *these qualifications*, the apostles never had, and never could have, any successors; yet, according to some, diocesan bishops have succeeded to the apostolic office! *Prophets* are mentioned in the second rank, as being next in importance to the apostles. To them was given the *word of knowledge*; they were enabled to foretell future events, and to edify the church by supernatural illumination. In the third place, God had appointed *teachers*, who perhaps assisted the apostles in the instruction of the young and ignorant, or were considered as the ordinary pastors of the church. In the parallel passage in Ephes. iv. 11. pastors and teachers are represented as the same order of men. In the church at Antioch, we read that there were “certain prophets and teachers,” (Acts xiii. 1.) Among the Jews there were persons called by this name, (*διδασκαλοι*) Luke ii. 4, 6. who were appointed to instruct the people in the knowledge of the law. Such was Gamaliel, (Acts v. 34.) After these, he placed those who were endowed with *miraculous powers*, who were enabled both to work miracles for the confirmation of their testimony, and to confer miraculous gifts on others, (see ver. 10.)—then those who were more especially commissioned to *heal the sick*, such as the elders mentioned, James v. 14, 15.; then those, who, like John Mark, ministered to the apostles as *helpers* in the work of the ministry. Such perhaps were the evangelists mentioned Eph. iv. 11. Dr Parkhurst thinks that the *αρωστηψαις*, or “helps,” were persons appointed to assist the aged and infirm.

This seems to have been the opinion of the ancient commentator Theophylact. By *governments*, are thought to be meant, spiritual men of prudence and experience, who were appointed to settle the civil disputes of their brethren, as in chap. vi. 5., or to give their opinion in cases of discipline. Dr Macknight translates the word *κυβερνήσεις*, *directors*, and supposes that it refers to those who possessed the gift of discerning spirits, answering to *διακρίσεις πνευμάτων* in ver. 10. Dr Owen thinks it refers to those elders who *ruled* in the church, as distinguished from such as laboured in word and doctrine, (1 Tim. v. 17.) According to this view, it answers to the *ὁ προϊστάμενος*, "he that ruleth," in Rom. xii. 8. It is certainly proper that persons of wisdom and experience should assist the churches with their counsel, always reserving the right of private judgment; but whether this be distinct from the deacon's office, or whether the word *elder* does not include both bishops and deacons, is not clearly ascertained. The word, *κυβερνήτης*, which is nearly the same, is applied to the pilot of a ship. *Lastly*, the Apostle mentions *diversities of tongues*, including those who spoke in foreign languages, and those who interpreted. It is observable, that these are placed *last*, as if to reprove and humble the Corinthians, who valued themselves chiefly on the gift of tongues. No particular form of church polity can be established from this passage, though there seems to be no countenance given to the multiplied gradations and titles of a hierarchy. If it be asked, what proportion of these offices may be considered as permanent; we answer, that teachers, helps, and governments, seem to be all that can now be employed. In every church there ought to be one or more pastors and teachers; to assist these, persons should be appointed to instruct the young and ignorant, such as our Sabbath school teachers, candidates for the ministry, and village itinerants. And for managing the *secular* affairs of the society, and assisting the church with their advice in cases of discipline, deacons or elders should be nominated as governments. These three classes embrace the various duties for which the disciples of Christ are united in church fellowship. With this enumeration may be compared that which is given, Rom. xii. 6—8. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given unto us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that

teacheth on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation ; he that *giveth*, let him do it with simplicity ; he that *ruleth*, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." So also, Eph. iv. 11. " And he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, in order to the edifying of the body of Christ." It is certainly a loss to many churches, that none are appointed as *helpers* to the pastor in the discharge of his manifold duties. But the burden which, in the primitive churches, was shared by several individuals, is frequently devolved upon one.

There is great wisdom displayed in instituting this diversity of offices—gifts of various kinds are called forth, and the wants of the different members are supplied. It would have introduced great confusion, to have conferred these offices on *all*. This would destroy that beauty which arises from the combination of various talents, and the subordination of the ordinary members to their proper rulers ; as in the natural body all vigour and comeliness would be effaced, should there be but one kind of members—or in civil society, one order of men—or in an army, only general and subaltern officers. In every community some must govern and direct, and some must obey. In the same manner with respect to the church, the Apostle asks, ver. 29. 30. " Are all apostles ? are all prophets ? are all teachers ? are all possessed of miraculous powers ? have all the gifts of healing ? do all speak with tongues ? do all interpret ?" It is easy to see what would be the consequence, if all the members of a church were teachers. Those would come forward who are least qualified ; jealousy would be apt to arise ; due preparation could hardly be made for the edifying of the church ; and the instruction, and consequently the conversion, of unbelievers, would be greatly circumscribed. Churches conducted on this plan are seldom of long continuance. It is evident, that not even in the days of the apostles, and in the plenitude of miraculous gifts, was the practice of promiscuous teaching adopted—all were not *teachers*. It is also clear, from this passage, that the prophets were not merely, as some have supposed, *exhorting brethren*, but a distinct order of extraordinary office-bearers. But we shall never dispute the right of private christians to act as *helpers* of each other's faith, where regular teachers, in sufficient numbers, cannot be obtained. In this case, how-

ever, regard should be had to the talents and character of the persons chosen.

According to our version, the 31st verse is an exhortation. "Covet earnestly (*ζηλουτε*) the best gifts, (*χαρισματα τα κριττονα*)."
And it is, no doubt, the duty of every christian, to aim at greater knowledge, and more general usefulness, as well as to strive to excel in every moral virtue. Yet this appears to many to be rather a *reproof* of their unhallowed emulations and mutual jealousies. Instead of being satisfied with their situation in the church, the disciples at Corinth *eagerly desired* the superior endowments which had been conferred on others, in the exercise of divine sovereignty, and neglected the improvement of their own proper talent. In opposition to this, the apostle observes, "And yet I shew you a more excellent way (*καθ' ὑπερβολην ὁδον*)."
This superior method he explains in the following chapter:—It is this—to make all their spiritual gifts subservient to the edification of others, and to temper the exercise of them with christian meekness and *love*. Some are ever ready to attach themselves to the most popular preachers, under pretence of seeking the best gifts, but they in fact gratify their love of novelty, and weaken the hands of their faithful pastors, without making any progress in scriptural knowledge, and in solid piety. These would do well to consider the apostolic admonition, "Be not carried about with diverse and strange (or new) doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein," (Heb. xiii. 9.)
On the subject of this lecture, the reader will find some useful hints in Mr Ewing's work on Church Government, page 12. Also in Mr M'Leod's excellent Treatise on the Gifts of the Primitive Church. It has been observed, that, long after this period, the church at Corinth shewed a disposition to set aside the authority of their pastors, which occasioned Clement to write to them his first epistle, which is still extant, and is considered genuine.

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is the duty of every christian to seek fellowship with a church of Christ—We must not look on with *indifference*, while our fellow christians weep or rejoice. Nor can we look for their

sympathy, if we stand aloof from them, and refuse to confess Christ before men. In proportion as this amiable spirit of mutual sympathy *prevails*, may we judge of the prosperity of a church. Those that are lukewarm in their religious profession, are in danger of being deprived of their privileges, (Rev. iii. 16.)

2. Let us admire the wisdom and faithfulness of Christ, in raising up a succession of persons duly qualified to edify and to govern his church. Are we blest with pious and diligent teachers? let us highly prize their gifts, and esteem them in love for their work's sake. Where due subordination is not maintained in a church, "there is confusion and every evil work."

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

ON CHRISTIAN LOVE.

THE Apostle had reproved the Corinthians on account of their mutual jealousies and contentions, in the exercise of their spiritual gifts. He had also intimated, that he would point out a *more excellent method* of improving their endowments for the general good. This he proceeds to do in this chapter, in which he discourses of the nature and worth of Christian love. So the word *agape* properly signifies. The chapter before us is one of the most eloquent passages to be found in any author, ancient or modern, and shews how easily the Apostle could avail himself of the graces of style, though he is pleased to speak of himself as rude in speech. It deserves to be inscribed in letters of gold, in all our places of worship, and ought to be engraved on the tablet of our heart. It commends the important grace of love, by every conceivable motive, and places it in every variety of light. A practical attention to this subject would restore the glory of the

church, repress many of the unhappy disputes that agitate the christian world; bring back, in some measure, the primeval age of innocence, and afford a blessed foretaste of the happiness of heaven.

It will be proper, before going further, to explain what kind of *love* it is of which the Apostle treats. It is not natural affection or private friendship, which, though excellent in themselves, are often united with selfishness and ungodliness; nor is it *charity*, commonly so called, or alms-giving, for it is expressly supposed that the duty of beneficence may be practised without it, (ver. 3.); nor is it the virtue of *philosophical benevolence*, which affects to promote the public good without any reference to christian principle; nor must it be confounded with natural *sweetness of disposition*, which is often put in its place, but cannot exhibit the lovely features here delineated. But it is that special grace of the Spirit, which springs from faith working by love. It includes complacency in the character of God, according to the revelation He has made of himself in his word. It consists chiefly in love to his people *as such*, for the truth's sake that dwelleth in them, without being limited to any particular denomination. It discovers itself by a disinterested concern for their happiness, both temporal and spiritual, and expands the bosom with universal goodwill to all mankind, as partakers of the same common nature. Love is the name by which God is made known to us; and *without it*, we can have no true knowledge of his character, (1 John iv. 8.) It is the bond of the church on earth; and the complete developement of it constitutes the blessedness of heaven.

Observe, first, that it is superior to all natural endowments of the mind. 1. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become (as) sounding brass (*χάλυξ ἤχου*), or an inharmonious cymbal (*κymbalon ἀλαλζον*)."
It excels all *human* eloquence,—every variety of language—every art of persuasion—every grace of elocution and style. It surpasses the tongues of *angels*; by which we are to understand the medium of their intercourse with one another, in proportion to the extent of their knowledge and capacity. When they proclaimed the birth of Christ, the song of the heavenly host fell like the sweetest music on the ears of the shepherds of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men." Without love, the most fluent and eloquent expressions would resemble the

monotonous sounds of the brazen trumpet, or the tinkling cymbal. They do not even deserve to be compared with the soft and harmonious notes of the pipe or harp. A profession of religion *without this* is an empty sound.

2. It is superior to all *spiritual gifts*. "Though I have prophecy, and know (*ἰδῶ*) all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so as to remove (*κτιθεῖσθαι*) mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." The Holy Spirit might employ persons destitute of this christian virtue, as the organ of his communications—to unfold future events, or even to describe the character and privileges of the people of God. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the case of the prophet Balaam. Such persons might have an extraordinary insight into the mysteries of the Gospel, and into the meaning of the ancient symbolical rites of the law, just as an unconverted man may acquire a large acquaintance with the secrets of nature, the discoveries of art, or the deductions of philosophy. They might have such a *confident persuasion* of the power of God, as should enable them to perform the greatest miracles, and to overcome the most formidable difficulties. Thus we have reason to think that Judas not only preached the Gospel, but wrought miracles, along with the other apostles, (Matt. x. 7, 8.) and our Saviour speaks of some who shall be rejected at the great day, who have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in his name, (Matt. vii. 22.) Such honourable distinctions, in the absence of christian love, would add nothing to our real worth. They would leave us as far as ever from the kingdom of heaven.

3. Without this grace of the Spirit, the most diffusive *benevolence*, and the most flaming *zeal*, would be utterly worthless: "And though I distribute (*ψαμίζω*) all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body that I may be burned (*καυθισθῶμαι*), and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." To sell all and to give to the poor, would be considered as a splendid act of generosity, and was indeed the test by which our Lord tried the faith of the young ruler, (Mark x. 21.) But even this might be done from unworthy motives, to acquire the applause of the world, or with a view to merit the favour of God. Ananias and Sapphira sold their estate, and brought a considerable part of the price to the apostles, while they were practising the grossest deceit, and living under the influence of a covetous spirit. In the same manner,

"to deliver the body to the flames" would be viewed as an uncommon instance of heroism and self-devotion. But a man may die a martyr in the cause of *error*; he may submit to the most violent tortures, like the wretched Hindoos, from a superstitious desire of appeasing the wrath of his idol gods, or he may be under the influence of *false zeal* and uncharitableness. Thus the lustre of the brightest action may be tarnished, and the most costly sacrifices offered in vain. Sincerity does not necessarily suppose the *goodness* of an action, unless it proceed from a right motive, and be directed to a proper end. Thus the unhappy votary of superstition endangers the loss of both worlds.

4—7. The Apostle now describes the excellent *qualities* of christian love: "It suffers long (*μακροθυμει*) and is kind (*χρησταιται*)."
It *patiently bears* the injurious treatment of others, without violently resenting injuries, or seeking to retaliate. It is *gentle* and *obliging*; full of mercy and good fruits; active in devising means for relieving the distresses, and promoting the happiness, of others. Like its divine author, it does good to the evil and to the unthankful, without expecting a recompense from man. "Love envieth not (*ου ζηλοι*), love vaunteth not itself (*ου πικριεται*), is not puffed up (*ου φουσιουται*)."
It is a stranger to bitter *zeal*; it does not repine at the good of others, but makes their happiness its own, and rejoices in the diffusion of knowledge and prosperity. It makes *no boast* of its own attainments, nor does it speak, in a vaunting manner, of the wealth, talents, or usefulness of its possessor. It is not *elated* with a vain conceit of its superior gifts, so as to overlook or despise the qualifications of others. "It does not behave itself unbecomingly (*ασχημονει*), seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked (*ου παροξυνεται*), thinketh or imagineth (*λογιζεται*) no evil." According to this description, it studies *decency* and propriety of behaviour towards all men, such as is suitable to their particular station or office. It does not regard *its own ease*, or interest, or fame, but is ready to sacrifice every selfish gratification to the general good, placing itself in the circumstances of others, and even anticipating their wants. It is not easily *exasperated* by ungrateful or unexpected returns, nor does it vent itself in harsh and disrespectful language, but in meekness instructs those who oppose themselves, and cultivates a soft and conciliatory manner. Having little acquaintance with the deceitful arts and crooked policy of the

world, it *does not suspect evil* in others, or impute bad motives to their actions; but is distinguished for integrity and simplicity, and is an utter stranger to duplicity and malice. "It rejoiceth not in iniquity (*ἐν τῇ ἀδικίᾳ*), but rejoiceth *with* the truth (*συγχαίρει*)." It feels *no pleasure* in hearing of the faults of professing christians, or in witnessing the depravity of mankind, but mourns in secret over the weakness and folly of human nature. On the other hand, it *rejoices* in hearing of the progress of true religion, in observing the consistent conduct of the disciples of Christ, and in the testimony of a good conscience. But as it rejoices "along with the truth," christian charity is widely different from that spurious candour which springs from indifference, and affects to consider all religious opinions as equally harmless. "It beareth (*ἀνυψ*) all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth (*υπομένει*) all things." It submits to the prejudices or infirmities of others, and *covers* them with the mantle of love. It puts the most favourable *construction* on the reports it hears, so far as evidence will go. Even where appearances are doubtful, it suspends its judgment, and *hopes* well of the character of others, in opposition to all detraction and calumny. It *patiently endures* the opposition it meets with in the cause of truth, as well as the afflictive dispensations of providence. Even natural affection leads a parent to endure many things from his children, which he would hardly bear from the hands of strangers. But the Gospel teaches us to "love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for such as despitefully use us," (Matt. v. 44.

8. Lastly, the Apostle describes the *permanency* of Christian love. It "never fails (*ἐκπίπτει*)." Other gifts are but temporary in their duration, as being intended only for a particular purpose. Thus, "whether it be prophesyings, they shall be abolished (*καταργηθῶσιν*), or tongues, they shall cease, or knowledge, it shall be done away." These were extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which have long since been withdrawn, when the truth of the Gospel had been fully established. Future events are no longer *unfolded* to the mind—languages must be acquired by the *ordinary means* of instruction, and the *knowledge* of divine truth is obtained, not as formerly, by immediate inspiration, but by the diligent study of the word of God. The word *γινώσις*, "knowledge," must here signify the supernatural suggestion of revealed

truth, for in this sense *alone* can it be said to be *abolished*. In the ordinary acceptation of the word, our knowledge shall be ever increasing, and the perfection of knowledge will constitute a great part of the happiness of heaven. These spiritual gifts were not only temporary, but were of limited extent, and conferred only on some individuals. 9. "For we know in part, (*καμέρους*) and we prophecy in part." Even the *ordinary* outward means of instruction shall be withdrawn, when the church has arrived at maturity in the glorified state. 10. "But when that which is perfect (*το τελειόν*) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." This may be illustrated by a reference to the manner in which the mental faculties in man, are gradually developed. At *first* our conceptions are obscure, and our judgment is biased by false conclusions. 11. "When I was a child (*νηπιος*) I spake as a child—I thought (*εφρονουν*) as a child—I reasoned (*ελογιζουην*) as a child." At present, we are but in the infancy of our being—our views of spiritual things are confused and partial, like the *lisping language*, the *trifling ideas*, and the *erroneous judgments* of a child. Children are only interested in the gratification of the moment—they are amused with glittering baubles; they cannot comprehend the reason of many things which they are required to do by their parent or teacher; and it is only by a long course of discipline that their views are expanded, and their judgment matured. As their faculties arrive at their full growth, they throw away the toys which delighted them before, and assume the language and the manners of manhood. "When I became a man, I put away (*κατηργηκα*) childish things." Our conceptions of spiritual objects are, at present, like the dim reflection of images in a *brazen mirror*—they are seen through an obscure medium, as when a moral truth is involved in an *enigma*: 12. "For now we see through a glass (*δι' ὁρατρον*) darkly (*ω αινιγματι*)." But when freed from this prison of clay, we shall have a more lively perception of eternal realities—they will appear in their native glory, and in their just proportions; we shall see "face to face," as when Moses beheld the brightness of the divine Majesty, and spake with God as a man speaketh to his friend. "At present, I know in part; then shall I know even as I am known, (*επεγνωσθην*)." In this world, clouds and darkness seem to gather round the throne of the Eternal: In the *future state*, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise upon us with uncloud-

ed splendour ; the mists of ignorance and unbelief shall disappear ; the mystery of Providence shall be unfolded ; and we shall be as intimately acquainted with spiritual objects, as our familiar friends are with us, or as we are known to superior beings, to angels and to God.

“ As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glimmer round the cell—
Whene’er their suffering years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glitt’ring sun ;
Such joy, though far transcending sense,
Have pious souls at parting hence !
On earth, and in the body placed
A few and evil years they waste ;
But when their chains are cast aside,
See the bright scene unfolding wide,
Clap the glad wing, and tower away,
And mingle with the blaze of day.”—PARNELL.

In fine, there are *three graces* of the utmost excellence, which have survived all extraordinary gifts, and have supported and cheered the minds of the faithful in every age: 13. “ And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.” *Faith* receives the promises of God as true, and is the appointed medium of justification. *Hope*, as an anchor of the soul, keeps it steadfast amidst all the storms and temptations of life ; but the exercise of faith and hope is limited to the present imperfect state—the one shall be exchanged for sight, and the other shall be swallowed up in fruition: *Love* is superior to them both, as the end is greater than the means—as that which is unchangeable is superior to that which is transitory. The flame of love shall never be extinguished. It shall continue to burn with increasing brightness, as the glorified saint is brought into nearer conformity to the holy image of God.

“ A time shall come when constant faith,
And patient hope shall die ;
One lost in certainty of sight,
And one dissolv’d in joy.

But love shall last when these no more
 Shall warm the pilgrims breast,
 Or open on his weary eyes
 His long expected rest.
 Love's unextinguish'd ray shall burn,
 Through death unchang'd its frame;
 Its lamp shall triumph o'er the grave
 With uncorrupted flame."

Nothing could be better fitted, than the reasoning of the Apostle in this chapter, to correct the erroneous sentiments of the Corinthians, respecting the value of their spiritual gifts. They were disposed to trust in *these* as sure marks of the special grace of God, while the spiritual men contended with each other for the pre-eminence, to the great injury of brotherly love. The Apostle shews that the most illustrious endowments of the Spirit were no certain criterion of true piety, and that they must yield, both in value and duration, to that divine love which they neglected and despised.

REFLECTIONS.

Let us cultivate the amiable principle here recommended to our notice, and pray for its revival in our own hearts, and in all the churches of Christ. This is the only sure test of the christian character, without which no superior talents, no scriptural knowledge, no popularity or usefulness, will be of any avail. The want of this virtue has occasioned those cruel persecutions, and unhallowed dissensions, that have so much hindered the prosperity, and impaired the beauty of the church. And never can we expect to see a revival of true religion, till the followers of Christ, laying aside their unprofitable disputes, shall embrace one another with pure hearts fervently, and shall put on charity towards each other, which is the perfect bond.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—19.

ON SPEAKING IN THE CHURCH IN AN UNKNOWN TONGUE.

WE have already noticed, that, among the Greeks, the art of eloquence was held in high estimation. We have also seen that among other spiritual gifts conferred on the primitive churches, the power of speaking in foreign languages was bestowed on many individuals, to facilitate the propagation of Christianity. In the church at Corinth there appear to have been several persons endowed with this faculty, and it is natural to suppose that they would be in great danger of being elated on that account. Forgetting the great end of these gifts, to promote the edification of the church, they not only despised those who were not thus distinguished, but made an ostentatious display of their gifts, to gratify their vanity and self-love. They were particularly delighted with the power of speaking in foreign tongues, and embraced every opportunity of exercising this faculty, frequently on very unseasonable occasions. This they did in the *ordinary assemblies* of the church, though few or none understood the language, and when no interpreter was present; nay, it would seem that several persons sometimes spoke at once, in different parts of the house. Thus the instruction of the people was sacrificed to the gratification of personal vanity. In this chapter the Apostle proceeds to correct this abuse, which in fact, was calculated to excite *unnecessary prejudice* against the christian religion. It has been justly observed that this temporary disorder has been wisely overruled for good. It has occasioned a more full account of the spiritual gifts to be handed down to us, than might otherwise have been afforded, and it more clearly demonstrates the reality of those extraordinary influences of the Spirit which accompanied

the original promulgation of the Gospel, and which, under God, secured for it a more speedy and general reception, than could otherwise have been expected. For to suppose that directions would be given respecting the proper exercise of a gift which did not exist, is absurd; and on no other principle can we account for the rapid progress of Christianity in the apostolic age. In this chapter, there are some things hard to be understood, owing to the *general manner* in which some practices are alluded to, but the directions here contained would no doubt be well understood by the persons to whom the epistle was addressed. The aim of the Apostle is, to correct the mistaken notions of the disciples at Corinth, respecting the importance and the design of the gift of *tongues*. It was indeed, a very splendid endowment, in which there was no room for collusion or mistake, and which especially proved the divine origin and excellence of Christianity, but it was not intended for the purposes of ostentation or vain parade. It was designed, not so much for the edification of the *disciples*, as to facilitate the spread of the Gospel, and to excite the attention of *unbelievers*, (ver. 22.) The great end of christians being united together in church-fellowship, was to promote their mutual improvement; but this object would be defeated, unless the discourses of the teachers were understood, and adapted to the capacities and circumstances of the people. He exhorts the Corinthians, therefore, to *pursue* with eagerness and diligence the noble grace which he had just recommended, as persons who had many obstacles and difficulties to encounter, in the attainment of their object, while it would be sufficient, if they *earnestly sought* supernatural gifts; but in their zeal for these, they must aim chiefly at that which would be best adapted for the edification of others, not at those which might be most *admired*. 1. "Follow after (*διωξτε*, pursue) love, and desire (*ζηλοῦτε*, be zealous for) spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." By *prophecy* in this chapter, we are to understand the gift of unfolding the doctrines and duties of Christianity, by supernatural suggestion, of illustrating the types and predictions of the Old Testament Scriptures, and even of offering up inspired prayers and praises, (ver. 26.) Thus Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, is said to have prophesied, when he uttered by the Spirit, that beautiful song of praise, which is recorded Luke i. 67—79. So Exod. xv. 20, 21. Numb. xi. 25. 1 Sam. x. 5, 6. Those who possessed this gift, were called *pro-*

phets, (ver. 29.) They generally spoke in a plain and practical manner, in the language which the people understood, (ver. 24.) and consequently their instructions were best adapted to the edification of the church in faith and holiness, (ver. 22.) Hence, the preference given to prophecy by the Apostle. From this account, it appears that this gift was peculiar to the apostolic times, and consequently it was quite different from the modern practice of exhortation by the brethren, adopted in some churches. Yet, assuming the identity of prophecy and exhortation, this chapter has been adduced both as affording a warrant, and furnishing directions, for this method of instruction. Let the practice of promiscuous exhortation, be defended on the ground of expediency or christian liberty; but let not the reasoning of the Apostle in this passage be urged in its defence, which relates to the exercise of a gift which has long since ceased in the church.

With regard to the gift of speaking in foreign languages, the Apostle observes, 2. "For he that speaketh in an (unknown) tongue, speaketh not to men, but unto God, for no one understandeth (*ακουει*, heareth) him, but in (or by) the Spirit (*πνευματι*) he speaketh mysteries." It is evident, that if a public speaker were to use a language not understood by his audience, he might indeed be said to address God, (especially in offering up prayer,) for He has a perfect knowledge of all the varieties of human speech, and He that teacheth man knowledge, must certainly know; but the speaker could not be said to address those who were ignorant of the language. It would be the same to them as if they did not *hear*. They could receive no benefit from what he said, even should he discourse of the most sublime *mysteries* of the Gospel, by the illumination of the *Spirit*; or, in another sense, the most simple and practical truths would be *mysterious* and unintelligible to them. The effect produced by *prophecy* was very different. 3. "He that prophesieth, speaketh edification and exhortation, (*ταραλυσιν*) and comfort (*παρηγοριαν*) to men." By this means the people would be *built up*, or instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel; they would be *exhorted* to duty, and *comforted* under trials and afflictions. An individual, speaking in a foreign language, might indeed promote *his own* edification, should he keep himself free from pride and vain-glory; 4. "He that speaketh in an (unknown) tongue, edifieth himself." From this it is evident that those who possessed the gift of tongues understood the im-

port of their own discourses; but this gift could be of no use in a *public assembly*, where the instruction of *others* is the grand object. Now, here lay the advantage of prophecy: "he that prophesieth edifieth the church." In making this distinction, the Apostle did not undervalue the gift of tongues, nor did he envy those who were possessed of it. On the contrary he would rejoice to see this gift *universal* among them, should the exigencies of the church require it, but still he would give the preference to the gift of prophecy, as being less *admired* indeed, but better adapted to general usefulness. 5. "I would (*θελω*, I wish) that ye all spoke with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied." A similar sentiment occurs, Numbers xi. 28, 29. When Joshua the son of Nun desired Moses to forbid the elders who prophesied in the camp, that great man nobly answered, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" The gift of tongues was inferior to that of prophecy, in point of usefulness, unless when the discourse was *interpreted*, either by the individual himself, or by some other qualified person. Now it was far less tedious and cumbersome to speak directly to the people in the language which they understood. Accordingly he remarks, "For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, unless he interpret (*εκτος ε μη διερμηνευη*) that the church may receive edification." According to *our* version, the person who speaks in a foreign language is supposed to interpret his own discourse. Dr M'Knight thinks this is inconsistent with the rule laid down ver. 28. where the person so qualified is commanded to *keep silence* if there were no interpreter; and indeed, if the speaker were able to interpret, there would seem no occasion for his using both languages. Accordingly the expression in the 5th verse is thought to be elliptical, and is thus translated by M'Knight, "unless some one interpret." But the Apostle would appeal to their own judgment for proof of what he had advanced. What would they think were he to address them in a language which they did not understand? Would they derive any advantage, unless he adopted one of the *ordinary* methods of instruction? 6. "But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I shall speak to you either by revelation (*αποκαλυψι*) or by knowledge (*γνωσι*), or by prophecy (*προφητεια*) or by doctrine (*διδαχη*)?"

It is not easy to understand the precise difference among these modes of instruction. By *revelation* may be meant the communication of some new truth by immediate suggestion of the Spirit; by *knowledge*, the illustration of some former discovery, by suitable arguments; by *prophecy*, that inferior kind of inspiration which enabled the prophets to edify the church by inspired prayers or exhortations; by *doctrine*, the ordinary way of pastoral instruction. Unless he spoke *intelligibly* in one of those methods, would his ministrations be productive of any good effects? This could not be expected.

He would illustrate his meaning by a reference to *inanimate objects*. 7. "In the same manner (*ὡς*) things without life (*ἄψυχα*) giving sound, whether pipe (*αὐλός*) or harp (*κithάρα*), unless they give a distinction (*διαστολή*) in the sounds (or notes, *φθόγγαις*), how shall it be known what is piped or harped?" A musical instrument must not only be capable of producing a variety of notes, but must be used by a skilful performer, otherwise it would emit only unmeaning sounds, significative of no particular air, and adapted neither to occasions of gladness or of mourning. And in the practice of *war*, the various movements of the army are regulated by certain sounds of the trumpet, such as the signal to march, to attack, or to retreat. 8. "Moreover if the trumpet give an uncertain (*ἄδηλος*) sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?" A wrong signal might thus occasion the destruction of an army. In the same manner the use of *speech*, if not adapted to the understanding of the persons addressed, would be a mere unmeaning sound. 9. "So likewise ye, unless you utter by the tongue intelligible discourse (*εὐσημοὶ λόγοι*), how shall it be known what is spoken; for ye will be speaking into the air." A discourse that is not *intelligible*, or easy to be understood, might as well be delivered in a *solitary waste* as in a full assembly. There were a great many languages and dialects spoken by different nations, and each of them was understood by a certain portion of the human race: but such varieties of speech were of no advantage to those who understood them not, and made the most polite and learned persons appear as *barbarians* to each other. It is in fact the greatest obstacle to a general intercourse among mankind. 10, 11. "There are perhaps (*ἢ* *τυχοὶ*) so many kinds of voices (*φωναί*) in the world, and none of them is without signification: if then I understand not the meaning (or power, *δυναμὴν*) of the voice,

I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and the speaker a barbarian to me." The Greeks and Romans denominated all foreigners barbarians, which name the Apostle uses according to the popular custom, without attaching to it any unfavourable meaning. In this sense it is used by Ovid, as observed by M^r Knight: "*Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli.*" "I am a barbarian in this place, because I am understood by none." The commentator just mentioned translates this verse, "There are perhaps as many kinds of languages in the world as ye speak." But there seems no occasion for this supplement. It cannot be supposed that the number of languages spoken by the inspired members of the Corinthian church would bear any proportion to the whole number spoken throughout the world, but this supplement would imply that the Apostle was uncertain respecting this; he uses a *general word*, without pretending to decide the precise number. The vast variety of human speech, is a clear proof of the confusion of languages.—If then, they were desirous of such gifts, they ought chiefly to value those that were most adapted for edification. 12. "So ye also, seeing ye desire (*ζηλωται*, are zealous of) spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel (*περισσευητε*, abound) to the edifying of the church." Let them pray for an abundant supply of those endowments that would enable them to *build up* the souls of their brethren in their most holy faith.

The Apostle would now address those who were possessed of the gift of tongues, on the *best method* of improving this talent. 13. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret." This is the same form of expression as occurred in ver. 5. and is liable to the same ambiguity. Let the person thus gifted, instead of using his talent in an ostentatious and unseasonable manner, either pray that he may be enabled at the same time to interpret what he delivered, or that he may act as interpreter to others, or let him pray so as *some one* may interpret; that is, when an interpreter is present. In any other way, though he might be distinctly conscious in his own mind of the meaning of what he uttered in prayer, he was not using his understanding, as a man and a christian, for the *improvement* of others. 14. "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind (*νοος*) is unfruitful." Dr M^r Knight translates the last clause, "my meaning is without fruit." The word *νοος*

seems to denote the faculty of *communicating* knowledge, as opposed to *senses*, or the *intellectual powers*, simply considered. How then would he have them to act? He would wish both the intellectual faculty and the power of communicating to be called into exercise. 15. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." It has been the practice of the church in all ages to celebrate the praises of God in the language of poetry, and to avail itself of the assistance of music: but there is no evidence that instrumental music was used in the primitive churches. Pliny takes notice of their singing hymns to Christ; and this practice is recommended, Eph. v. 19. and Col. iii. 16. From ver. 26. it would appear that the inspired persons in the Corinthian church composed divine songs which were used in public worship. The Society of Friends, among other peculiarities, has laid aside this solemn and delightful exercise. But the words used in praise, as well as in prayer, should be such as are *easily understood*, and it is to be regretted that figurative and prophetic passages of Scripture are often sung in churches without any explanation of their meaning.

It is evident, also, that no rational assent could be given by the hearers or *private members*, to prayers or thanksgivings offered up in a language which they did not understand. 16. "For otherwise, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he who fills the place of the unlearned or *private person* (*ἀνέλκων τοῦ τοῦ τοῦ ἰδιώτου*) say amen to thy thanksgiving, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest?" The word Amen, when used at the conclusion of a prayer, properly implies an assent to its truth and a desire for its fulfilment, and may be rendered "so be it;" but it is evident that such an assent would be both *irrational* and *hazardous*, if the language employed were not understood. Under the Old Testament, this word was audibly pronounced by the people in token of their assent, Deut. xxi. 15. 1 Chron. xvi. 36.; and there seems no reason to doubt that the same word was *so uttered* by the primitive christians, at the conclusion of their public prayers. The word *ἰδιώτης* seems here to describe the private members or uninspired persons. If the practice alluded to, be *now* disused in many churches, surely the expression of approbation should at least be uttered in *silence*, in a devout and solemn manner. It is

much to the discredit of christian congregations, when the people prepare to resume their seats, before the words of prayer are concluded, as is frequently the case in this country. Such a prayer as the Apostle alludes to, might be *very appropriate*; and might be delivered in the best language, but the unlearned hearer could derive no advantage from it. 17. "For thou, indeed, givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." The reasoning of the Apostle in these two verses, clearly proves, that, if the language of prayer be understood, the hearer is warranted to pronounce the *Amen*; and it is his own fault if he be not edified. This overthrows the main argument for the use of *written forms*. It is argued, that the hearer cannot venture to give his consent to extempore prayers, for he does not know *before hand* what petitions are to be offered up; and he cannot judge of the propriety of what is said, with sufficient readiness, to be able to *follow the speaker*. But this is directly contrary to the Apostle's conclusion. If prayers be offered up with due solemnity, and with *some regard* to a proper arrangement, there is no reason why the hearer should not be able to follow the speaker in prayer, as well as in preaching. This is candidly admitted by Mr Scott. Such forms can only be necessary where the ministers of religion are unqualified to lead the devotions of a public assembly. The superiority of free prayer to prescribed forms, is ably proved by Dr Dwight, in his System of Theology (Ser. 144.)

Paul did not depreciate the gift of tongues, from a spirit of *envy*, as if he were destitute of it himself; for, as the apostle of the Gentiles, he excelled all the Corinthians in the faculty of speaking in foreign languages. 18. "I thank my God, speaking (*λαλῶν*) with tongues more than you all." According to the structure of this sentence, it would seem that the Apostle refers to the number of languages in which he could offer up *thanks* to God. This translation is preferred by several eminent critics. According to our version, he devoutly acknowledges the divine goodness in imparting to him so abundant a measure of this spiritual gift. We find him addressing the Jews in Hebrew, (Acts xxi. 40.) In the same chapter he is said to have used the Greek language in speaking to the chief captain, ver. 37. His epistles shew him to have been master of this; and there can be no doubt that he would require a great variety of languages, considering the extent of his travels. But so far was this excellent man

from making a parade of this splendid gift, that he declares he would rather utter one short sentence in a christian assembly, in a language which they understood, than deliver the most elaborate and eloquent oration in a foreign language. 19. "But in the church, I would rather speak five words, with my understanding (*νοεῖς*), that I might instruct (*καταχρησάω*) others also, than ten thousand (*μυριάς*) words in an unknown tongue." The word *five* is finely contrasted with *myriads*. Thus he instructed them what estimate *they* should form of the gift of tongues *apart* from the great design of edifying mankind.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The reasoning of the Apostle in this chapter, exposes the folly of the church of Rome, in requiring the use of the Latin language in her public liturgy. The Roman Catholic annotators are reduced to the necessity of employing a wretched quibble, to evade the force of this passage. "The Latin used in our liturgy," they say, "is so far from being a strange or unknown tongue, that it is perhaps the best known tongue in the world." We do not dispute this, so far as the *learned* are concerned: but the question is—Is it well known to him who "occupies the place of the *illiterate*?" Is it familiar to the great body of the congregation? None will be so bold as to assert this. The very circumstance of the Roman clergy allowing translations in the vernacular tongue, disproves it. But it is to *such persons* the Apostle refers. It is expressly *on their account* that he enjoins prayers to be offered up in the language that is best understood. Nor can the common people correctly follow the public prayers, when offered up in a dead language, even with the help of a translation. No wonder that the clergy of the Romish church are averse to the publication of the Scriptures without comment.

2. It is not only necessary that prayers and religious discourses should be delivered in the *vernacular* tongue; but great pains should be taken, by the preachers of the Gospel, to render their instructions *intelligible* to the common people. A plain and easy style should be studied, at once free from the affectation of fine language and deep reasoning, and from coarse familiarity. If we do not adapt our words to the understanding of the multitude, *as then* we speak in an unknown tongue. In *preaching*, every

thing must be made subservient to the improvement of the unlearned, in knowledge and piety,

3. We must study rightly to divide the word of truth, applying it to the conscience of the hearers, and suiting it to their varied circumstances. We must learn to sound the gospel trumpet in a *skilful manner*. If it gives an uncertain sound, who will bestir himself to the spiritual conflict? Some must be warned—others exhorted and reproved—others edified and comforted.

4. Let us admire the goodness of Divine Providence in providing for the original diffusion of the Gospel by the gift of tongues. How evident a proof of divine interposition! How much labour is now required in learning a foreign language. This is the most formidable difficulty which modern missionaries have to encounter. Yet the absence of this gift is in some measure supplied by means of the *press*, which has multiplied copies of the Scriptures to an extent which would have been deemed impossible in ancient times. May the British and Foreign Bible Society continue to spread the sacred volume, till men of every nation shall be able to read, “in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God!”

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 20—40.

ON PROPHECYING.

THE Apostle had reproved the Corinthians for the disorderly manner in which they exercised the gift of tongues, particularly for speaking in the church in a foreign language, when there were few or none present who understood or could interpret what was said. This gift they especially valued as a proof of their *great proficiency* in divine knowledge; but the Apostle tells them, that in this matter, they were acting like children, whose judgment is not yet matured, and who generally form a false estimate of things 20. “Brethren,” says he, “be not children (*παιδία*) in understanding (*ταῖς φησίαις*).” Their present conduct was unbecoming the *dignity* of the christian character, and unsuitable to the free spirit of the Gospel dispensation. The church was no longer in a state of

childhood or pupillage, as it had been under the law, but was arrived at man's estate, and must be under the guidance of an enlightened judgment, (Gal. iv. 1—5.) The Gospel appeals to the *understanding*, and commends itself to the conscience and to the heart. It lays down certain general principles, and leaves the application of these to particular circumstances, to the judgment of individual christians, as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore our duty to use every means of increasing in knowledge and in holiness. There was indeed *one quality* in which he had no wish to see them excel, that is, in *malice* or wickedness. With respect to this, he would have them always to remain as children: for the less they knew of the crooked ways of the world, and of the unfruitful works of darkness, so much the better for the peace and purity of their minds: "Nevertheless in malice (*κακαίας*) be ye children (*νηπιότροι*)." It was the desire of knowing *evil* that occasioned the fall of our first parents, and which still tempts their posterity to venture into forbidden paths. Our natural depravity is sufficiently strong, without seeking to inflame the passions, by imitating the manners, and mingling in the pleasures of the multitude. The docility, meekness, and unsuspecting confidence of little children, are recommended to our notice as the ornament of the christian character (Matt. xviii. 3); but with respect to christian prudence, he would again say, "In understanding be ye perfect, or full grown men (*τελειοί*)." The sentiment of this passage is explained by what he says in writing to the Romans. "I would have you *wise* unto that which is good, and *simple* concerning evil," (chap. xvi. 19.) The same sentiment is expressed in the exhortation of our Lord, "Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Thus the christian ought to be "in wit a man—simplicity a child."

In order still further to moderate their blind admiration of the gift of tongues, the Apostle remarks, that, in the Old Testament, speaking to the people in a foreign language, was generally introduced as a *threatening*, not as a *privilege*. Thus in Isaiah xxviii. 11., after the prophet had reproved the incredulity and sloth of the Jewish nation, who would not be persuaded to receive instruction though delivered in the plainest terms, Jehovah declares, that he would address them by those whose language they could not understand. "For with *tumming* lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." Alluding to this, with-

out following the version of the LXX. the Apostle says: (31.) "In the law it is written, that with other tongues, and with other lips, will I speak to this people, and not even *thus* (*οὕτως*) will they hear me, saith the Lord." The word *law* is frequently applied to the whole of the Jewish Scriptures, (John x. 34. Rom. iii. 10—19.) This prediction is thought to have a *primary* reference to the invasion of Judea by the *Chaldeans*, and afterwards by the *Romans*. The *languages* of these nations were not understood by the *Jews*, but they were severely chastised by them on account of their sins. Thus the Roman invasion is thought to be predicted by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 49.) with a particular reference to *this very circumstance*: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation *whose tongue thou shalt not understand*." Thus it is evident that the prediction in the text is the announcement of a judgment, and supposes the *unbelief* of the people: but even these chastisements would fail to lead them to repentance. The passage may have a *further* reference to the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles, at the introduction of the Gospel dispensation. In consequence of this, they in a great measure lost the use of their vernacular tongue, and were addressed on the day of pentecost, by the apostles, in various languages, (Acts ii. 8.) For this purpose the gift of tongues was imparted, which at once served as a medium of communication, and as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel. It may also be observed, that the various languages now spoken by the Jews, present a formidable obstacle to the believing Gentiles, in attempting their conversion to the Christian faith.

It is evident, therefore, that men are supposed to be in a *state* of unbelief and obstinate opposition to the truth, where they are said to be addressed in a foreign language. This is necessary in order to excite their attention, to remove their prejudices, or to arouse their fears. 22. "Wherefore (he adds) tongues are for a sign, not to believers, (*πίστους*) but to unbelievers." Hence it was never intended for the edification of the church, which consists of those who have already *believed*, and requires to be *built up* rather than *converted*. Now this was the design of *prophecy*, by which instruction was communicated, and *direction* given to the faithful, in the vernacular tongue, according to the various circumstances and cases of each. In other words, "*prophecy*, is not for them that believe not, but for them that be-

Mirac. Dr McKnight reads this clause "prophecy is for a sign," &c. But believers are not supposed to require a miraculous sign; and therefore the supplement in our common version seems preferable, "prophecy *serveth* not for unbelievers," &c.

At the same time, prophetic instruction was not only best fitted for the improvement of the *disciples*, but it was also highly useful in producing conviction on the minds of those *heathens*, or *unlearned persons*, who might occasionally frequent the christian assemblies. 23—25. "If, then, the whole church be come together (*συνελθόντες*, be assembled) in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there enter unlearned or unbelieving persons (*ἰδιώται ἢ ἀπίστοι*), will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or is unlearned, he is convinced by all, (*ἀποκρίνεται ὑπο πάντων*) he is judged, (*ἀποκρίνεται*, examined, McKnight) by all; and thus the secrets of his heart, are made manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, reporting (*ἀπαγγέλλων*) that God is truly among you, (*ὅτις ἐν ὑμῖν*). We have already had occasion to observe (on chap. xi. 19.) that the Corinthian church consisted of one congregation, and met together in one place, which was also the case with other churches, not excepting the church at Jerusalem, (Acts v. 12; xxi. 22.) Now it was of great importance, in their religious assemblies to avoid every practice that might shock the feelings and confirm the prejudices of such occasional hearers, who were still in an unconverted state, but whom curiosity might bring to their place of meeting,—or which might lead them to carry away an *unfavourable report* of Christian worship. But the indiscreet and unseasonable use of the gift of tongues was *very much* calculated to produce this effect. They might come with purpose to find fault, or expecting to obtain some information, with regard to the doctrines and ordinances of the new religion; but if they should hear all the inspired teachers speaking in foreign languages, and perhaps several at one time, in different parts of the house, what impression would naturally be produced on their minds? Would they be induced to admire and believe? Quite the contrary. They would immediately conclude that the christians were *wild enthusiasts*, whose assemblies were a shocking scene of confusion and noise. Thus, like the Jews on the day of pentecost, they would be ready to turn the whole service into ridicule, (Acts ii. 13.) and would be confirmed

in the opinion so generally formed of the christian teachers, that "much learning had made them mad." (Acts. xxvi. 24.)

Very different would be the impression produced by prophecy, or the instruction of the people in their own tongue, in some point of practical or experimental religion: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Hence a discourse adapted to the *understanding*, and faithfully applied to the *conscience* of the hearer, according to the general laws or principles of human nature, will in all probability under the divine blessing, come home to the *heart*, and produce the most powerful emotions. In the case before us, the unbeliever might have come from motives of curiosity, or with a design to cavil at the doctrine, or to interrupt the services of the church by profane mockery, or to find matter of accusation against the followers of Christ: What then would be his surprise, when he found the secrets of his heart laid open by one speaker after another, as if they had been perfectly aware of the motives of his coming, as if they were acquainted with his whole history, and with his most intimate thoughts, as if they were addressing him alone in the midst of the congregation? Thus, "he is reproved and examined by them all:" he feels as if his whole character were exposed to their view; his plausible arguments and long-cherished prejudices against the truth, are all swept away; the depravity of his heart is *made evident* to his conscience; he is awakened to a sense of his spiritual danger, and, unable to resist the strength of his emotions, regardless of appearances and of consequences, he falls prostrate on the ground, and acknowledges the presence of the Divine Majesty. He unites his adorations and praises with those of the faithful, and, returning to his house, he *publishes* to all around, the great things which God has done for his soul. In the language of Jacob he exclaims, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven!" (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.) Thus the doctrines of the Gospel are admirably fitted to the *moral condition* of man. It is the master-key which opens all the chambers of imagery in his breast. It speaks directly to his heart. It discovers an entire acquaintance with the human character, and, *independently of external evidence*, carries with it the proof of its heavenly origin, in its transforming effects on the heart. Such impressions as those here specified, have often been pro-

duced, both in ancient and modern times, by powerful and searching preaching. Then those who "have come to mock," have literally "remained to pray." This has been particularly the case under great revivals of religion. O that such effects were more frequent and general!

At present, the conduct of the inspired members of the Corinthian church was very disorderly. 26. "What is it, then, brethren? When ye come together, each of you hath a psalm (*ψαλμὸν*), hath a doctrine (*διδάχνη*), hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." Each spiritual person brought a different subject of discourse along with him, and all were eager to deliver their own exercises, without regard to the solemnity of the occasion, or the improvement of the church. One had an inspired song, another a practical discourse, another a communication in a foreign tongue, another some revelation of a particular truth, another was ready to act as an interpreter, or brought an interpretation of what had been delivered on a former occasion, and perhaps all these spoke at one time: was this indeed the case? Then how indecent and unbecoming a practice! Was it not time to lay it aside? Such seems to be the sense of the words *τι οὐκ ἐστίν*. Dr M'Knight translates them, "What then is to be done?" as if the Apostle were anticipating an enquiry on their part, as to the proper mode of conducting their religious services. In this view, the following words contain an answer to the question, and are intended as a general rule: "Let all things be done for edification."

With regard to particular directions, he observes, 27. "If any one speak in an (unknown) tongue, let it be by two, (*κατὰ δύο*) or at most by three, and that by course (*ἀνα μίρας*); and let one interpret." Those who had the gift of tongues, might exercise that talent, providing they did not speak in more than two or three different languages, and that in regular order or succession, as the words may signify. Or, according to others, not more than three individuals were thus to speak at one meeting, and that not simultaneously, but successively; or, as M'Knight understands the words, the person speaking in a foreign language was to deliver his discourse "by two or three sentences at once," so as to allow time for the interpreter to explain the meaning. At any rate, this mode of teaching was only to be allowed, when there was some one present who could interpret. Otherwise the

individual endowed with the gift of tongues, must remain a silent hearer, and reserve this talent for his personal edification, and the exercises of private devotion. 28. "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence (*σιγήσω*) in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God."

In the same manner, *two or three prophets* might successively address the church, while those who were endowed with the gift of discerning spirits might judge if the sentiments they expressed were dictated by inspiration, or were merely the result of private suggestion. 29. "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge or discern (*διακρίνωσαν*)."
If, in the meantime, some revelation were made to one of the inspired persons sitting near, relating either to the same subject, or to some other point of doctrine, the individual to whom the discovery was made, must not interrupt the speaker, but must wait till he had finished his discourse. 30. "But if to another (prophet) sitting (*καθησώμενος*) any thing be revealed (*ἀποκαλυφθῇ*), let the first be silent (*σιγήσω*). In this way, all the prophetic teachers might have an opportunity of uttering their sentiments, by observing a regular succession, and thus all the hearers would be instructed and consoled. And they must be sensible that this method of instruction was quite practicable. 31. "For ye are all able (*δυνάμεσθε*) to prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted, (or admonished, *παράκληται*)."
In this respect, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was not like the wild and frantic impressions produced on the minds of the heathen priests: It left them in the calm exercise of their intellectual powers, and they were able to restrain their emotions till a fit opportunity presented itself of communicating their sentiments. Their spiritual gifts were under the guidance of enlightened wisdom. 32. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." This is agreeable to our conceptions of the wisdom and goodness of him by whom these gifts were bestowed, who reduced the world into harmonious order from the confusion of chaos, and who arranges all the dispensations of providence and grace for the re-establishment of peace on earth. This also is the great end of those ordinances which he has instituted in all the assemblies of the faithful. 33. "For He is not the God of confusion, (*ἀκαταστάσις*, of disturbance or anarchy,) but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." By this turn of expression, the Apostle intimates that the church at

Corinth was the only christian society in which such confusion was permitted.

There was another practice which the Apostle disapproved of, which seems to have been introduced into the church of Corinth, namely, the custom of females speaking in public. 34. "Let your women (or wives, *γυναῖκες*) keep silence in the churches, for it has not been permitted (*ἐπιτεταται*) unto them to speak, but to be under subjection, (*υπακούετε*) as also saith the law." He had before exposed the impropriety of women praying or prophesying with the head uncovered. Here he forbids them, under any circumstances, to speak in the church. It would seem then, that, in the former passage, (chap. xi. 5.) only such private instructions, or acts of devotion, are alluded to, as might be consistent with female propriety, and that even the prophetesses or inspired females, were not allowed to speak in the *public assemblies*, but confined their instructions to private circles, or to persons of their own sex. Others think he here refers to *uninspired* women; but the arguments adduced are of a general nature, and seem equally conclusive against all sorts of public teaching on the part of females. Such a practice is *unsuitable* to the station which Providence has assigned them. They are required to be obedient to their own husbands in every thing; but teaching is an act of authority, and is therefore inconsistent with a state of subjection, as the Apostle elsewhere intimates, (1 Tim. ii. 12.) This principle is recognized by all nations, and may be termed a law of nature. It is also confirmed by the authority of the *Old Testament writings*. To the first woman it was said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," (Gen. iii. 16.) The Apostle would not even permit females to put any question to the teachers in public; but recommends them, if they wanted information respecting any point of doctrine or duty, to enquire of their husbands, in the *family*. 35. "And if they wish (*θέλωσι*) to learn any thing, let them ask their own (*τοὺς ἰδίους*) husbands at home." Thus they would both improve their minds, and consult their own honour. For they must be aware that it was unsuitable to the natural modesty and reserve of the female character, to address a public assembly of both sexes. "It is an indecent thing (*αισχρὸν*) for women to speak in a church." Some think that the following words are addressed to the female members of the church: 36. "What! did the word of God go

out from you, women, (*ἀφ' υμῶν*) or did it come to you only?" Were females employed at first to preach the Gospel, or did they only receive it through the instrumentality of men? This is Dr M'Knight's translation. But had this been the Apostle's meaning, the adjective *μονος*, would have been put in the feminine gender (*μονας*). It seems more probable that the question is addressed to the members of the Corinthian church in general. Was it the mother and model of other churches, that it affected to introduce new customs, or were they, as *Gentiles*, only converted by means of the Apostles and Evangelists, who were of the Hebrew nation? This was a severe reproof of their vanity and self-confidence. But the Apostle would further appeal to the judgment of the inspired members, as to the divine authority of these directions. 37. "If any one appears (*δοξῇ*) to be a prophet or spiritual man (*πνευματικὸς*), let him acknowledge the things that I write to you, that (*ὅτι*) they are the commandments of the Lord." On this verse, Dr M'Knight observes, "Here *δοξῇ* is not an expletive, but denotes the *certainty* of the thing spoken of." The Apostle, in this passage, evidently lays claim to *plenary inspiration*. If any one pretended ignorance of this truth, or affected to doubt the divine authority of these precepts, the Apostle would not stop to argue the point with him. His ignorance was the effect of *wilful* obstinacy, and no further proof could be given him. 38. "But if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant." There was no other way of convincing him.

On the *whole*, the Apostle would give the preference to prophecy; though he would not wish them to *hinder* those from speaking in foreign languages, who possessed that gift, providing, as before noticed, that due care were taken to interpret the discourse. 39. "Wherefore, brethren, be zealous (*ζηλοῦτε*) for prophecy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues." The persons so endowed, might be very profitably employed in *spreading the Gospel* among different nations. As a general rule, he would again enjoin a becoming attention to *solemnity* and *regularity* in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, and in conducting their public worship. 40. "Let all things be done decently (*εὐσημεῖως*), and in order (*κατὰ τάξιν*)." Dr M'Knight's note on this verse is exceedingly judicious. "This precept is sometimes applied to support the use of rites and ceremonies in the worship of God, not commanded in scripture. But any one who considers the place which

it holds in this discourse, will be sensible that it hath no relation to rites and ceremonies, but to the decent and orderly exercise of the spiritual gifts. Yet, by parity of reason, it may be extended even to the rites of worship, provided they are left free to be used by *every one* as he sees them expedient." To admit that religious ceremonies of human invention are things indifferent, and to enforce their observance as *indispensable*, is certainly very absurd. The observation of the enlightened commentator, Mr Scott, deserves also to be quoted as an honourable proof of his liberality of sentiment: "To adduce this text as a direct argument about any particular external ceremonies used in divine worship (which always appear decent and orderly to those who invent, impose, or are attached to them, and the contrary to those who dissent from them,) is doubtless wrenching it from its proper meaning."

REFLECTIONS.

1. We have already seen, that the inspired instructions of the prophets in the primitive churches, must not be confounded with the exhortations of ordinary members in modern church meetings. The same remark may be applied to the mode of instruction adapted by the Society of Friends. They profess to conduct their religious worship according to the rules laid down in this chapter; but the circumstances of the speakers are widely different. They may feel themselves *inclined*, under the influence of religious zeal, or from the impulse of christian sympathy, to address their brethren at particular times; but let them not speak as if the subject of discourse were *revealed* to them, or as if they were guided by a direct illumination of the Spirit. No doubt, we have the general promise of *assistance* in the discharge of every religious duty; but our knowledge of divine truth must be *acquired* by the divine blessing on our diligent study of the Scriptures; and our ability to teach, must bear some proportion to the improvement of our natural talents by ordinary means. We cannot but remark, also, that their practice of allowing their *single* members to speak in the church, seems directly contrary to the apostolic precept; nor can such irregularities be fairly ascribed to *Him*, who is not the author of confusion, but of order, in all the churches of the saints.

2. Let us avoid every practice in the worship of God, that would excite the prejudices of *unbelievers*. Let the edification of the church, and the conviction of sinners, be ever considered as the great end of our meeting together. Whatever is destructive of *these*, must defeat the object for which we assemble. Let us ever maintain a becoming *decorum* in the presence of God. When a stranger sees the wandering eyes, the listless countenances, the unbecoming levity, of some, and the shameful drowsiness of others, in almost all our congregations, may he not justly charge us with *folly*, and conclude that our religious worship is all a pretence?

3. When the Apostle exhorts christian women to seek information on religious subjects from their husbands *at home*, is it not supposed that believing families will be frequently convened, for the purpose of reviewing the doctrines they have heard, and of promoting each others' spiritual knowledge? Let parents examine the progress of their children, especially on the Lord's day, and encourage all the members of their family to *enquire* the meaning of those truths which appear to them dark or obscure. "These words which I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. vi. 6, 7.)

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—Verses 1-11.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

We have, for some time back, been occupied with discussions which may have appeared uninteresting to some, as having a more particular reference to the circumstances of the primitive churches. It was necessary, however, in a regular course of exposition, to illustrate the meaning of the sacred writer in those passages, and to remove certain difficulties connected with them. We are now arrived at a more pleasing and deeply important subject, on which it may be proper to dwell more at length. The resurrection of the body is a doctrine fraught with consolation to the believing mind. It forms an essential part of that plan of mercy, by which the great Jehovah designed to repair the ruins of the fall, and to display the abounding riches of his grace. Man, at first, was made in the image of God, free from all imperfection, whether natural or moral. Sin, and its penalty, *death*, were unknown. But by the disobedience of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, and death reigns over the whole human race without controul. What was lost in the first Adam, is restored by the second. As all the natural offspring of the *former* were involved in the consequences of *his* transgression, so the spiritual seed of the *latter*, share in the blessed fruits of his obedience. This doctrine is clearly laid down by this same Apostle, in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. There he calls the first Adam a *type*, or figure, of him that was to come.

The doctrine of the resurrection was intimated to the antediluvian world by the translation of Enoch. It was believed by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who looked for a heavenly country, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, (Heb. xi. 13, 15.) The Apostle instructs us, that

when Abraham offered up Isaac, he "believed that God was able to raise him up even from the dead," (ver. 19.) It was confirmed by the language of God to Moses, when he appeared to him in the bush, as illustrated by our Saviour: "Now, that the dead are raised even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," (Exod iii. 15. Luke xx. 37.) It seems to be referred to in the Psalm of Moses, (xc. 3.) according to the judgment of several eminent critics. "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest return ye children of men," viz. from the grave. The patriarch Job confesses his belief in this truth, (chap. xix. 25, 26.) "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The translation of Elijah afforded a glorious illustration of this doctrine, and the case of those individuals who were miraculously restored to life by the prophets, furnished a further evidence of it. (2 Kings iv. 35.; xiii. 21.) The psalmist David frequently alludes to the doctrine of the resurrection, (Ps. xvi. 10.; xvii. 15.; xlix. 15.) It is referred to in the writings of the prophets, (Isa. xxvi. 19. Hosea xiii. 14.) Accordingly, the Apostle alludes to those Old Testament saints, who refused deliverance from tortures, "that they might share in a better resurrection." (2 Maccab. vii. Heb. xi. 35.)

It was a doctrine held by the generality of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's appearance, and was denied, only by the licentious Sadducees, (John xi. 24. Acts xxiv. 15.) But it was reserved for the Gospel to bring life and immortality clearly to light. Hence, it occupied a prominent place in the preaching of our Lord and his apostles, (John v. 28, 29. Acts xvii. 18.) The appearances in the natural world, though they do not directly prove, illustrate and confirm this important subject. We behold a resemblance of the resurrection, when the face of the earth is renewed in the season of spring, and when all nature seems to awake from its death-like silence. The sun returns in his strength—trees and flowers shoot forth their leaves and blossoms—the various tribes of animals are inspired with new vigour, and the insect glitters in the genial ray. It is an easy task for Him who reared our frame at first, to repair its ruins, and to re-animate our mouldering dust. It is agreeable to our conceptions

of his infinite goodness, to suppose he will do so. For, as we were not formed mere spirits, but creatures endowed with corporeal faculties, deriving much of our enjoyment through the medium of the senses, the restoration of the bodily frame is necessary to the completion of our happiness. We do not maintain, that every individual particle of which this frame is composed, must necessarily be reunited in the resurrection body, for the corporeal system is even at present undergoing perpetual change; but so much will be restored, as is necessary to constitute *personal identity*. Were this not the case, it would not be a resurrection of the *same* body, but the creation of a *new* one.

This doctrine was early lost sight of, in the heathen world. Perhaps it was owing to this circumstance, that, instead of committing the bodies of the dead to the grave, according to the original practice, they consumed them on the funeral pile. It was considered, by the proud Stoics, as a mean and unworthy expectation; hence they called it the hope of worms. It was ridiculed by the Epicureans, as impossible. (Acts xvii. 18.) It was explained away by philosophizing christians, as signifying a mere *moral renovation*. Hence, they spoke of it as already past, (2 Tim. ii. 18.) These various errors arose from their not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. (Matt. xxii. 29.)

Now, it was of the utmost importance to establish and illustrate this truth, so as to place it on a firm basis; and the objections brought against it afforded an opportunity for the sacred writer to set it in a clearer and more convincing light. This he does in the chapter before us, which has been long admired, on account of its close reasoning, its rich imagery, and eloquent style. Before proceeding to the main argument, the Apostle enumerates the proofs of *our Saviour's resurrection*, as having an intimate connexion with the general doctrine: *First*, Because our Lord repeatedly asserted, that there would be a resurrection, both of the just and of the unjust, (John v. 28, 29.; chap. vi. 39, 40.) Now, the resurrection of Christ set the seal of Heaven to this, and all other doctrines taught by him. *Secondly*, Our Lord's resurrection, being a well authenticated fact, proved that such a revival of the body from the grave was not impossible—for the same energy that could restore our Saviour to life, after he had been actually dead and buried, could quicken the bodies of his people. *Thirdly*, Our Lord rose as the head and representative of

his church, and thus secured the resurrection of all his followers; and *lastly*, The resurrection of Christ was intended, not only as a *pledge*, but as a *pattern*, of that of his saints. Hence, in another place, (Phil. iii. 20.) the Apostle says of our Saviour, "he shall change our vile body, (or the body of our humiliation,) and fashion it like to the body of his glory, according to the power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." So, in writing to the Thessalonians, he represents the resurrection of believers as a *consequence* of Christ's resurrection: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," (1 Thess. iv. 14.) On *this proof* he therefore insists, at great length, in the first part of the chapter. He then shews, by a reference to the immensity and variety of the operations of God in the natural world, that such an event is quite agreeable to his infinite goodness and power. He afterwards obviates an objection which might be brought against this doctrine, namely, that the restoration of this frail and feeble body would rather *obstruct* than *promote* the happiness of the glorified spirit, by shewing that it proceeds from a mistaken view of the subject, as if the resurrection body would be in *all respects* the same as that which we now have: whereas there is a material difference between the *natural* or *animal*, and the *spiritual* body which the saints shall then receive. I may just add, that it is the resurrection of the *blessed* which is treated of in this passage, as is evident from the whole strain of reasoning.

The Apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, reminds the Corinthians of the leading truths of that Gospel which he had *made known* to them, which they had *received* as a faithful saying, and in which, he hoped, they still confided, as their only ground of confidence before God. 1. "Moreover, brethren, I make known to you the good news (το ευαγγελιον) which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and in (or by, εν) which ye stand." He expresses his charitable persuasion, that, notwithstanding the attempts of the false teachers, they still *stood firm* in the belief of those doctrines which they had received by his instrumentality, as glad tidings of great joy. By means of this Gospel, they had been delivered from the power of sin, and had been brought into a state of salvation;—and they would finally be put in possession of eternal blessedness, "if they continued in the faith grounded and settled," and held fast the truth as they had been taught, un-

less they would *lose the benefit* of their professed subjection to the Gospel, and revert to their original state of ignorance and sin. But *this* would be the effect of their embracing any dangerous error, such as denying the important doctrine here alluded to. 2. "By which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast (*κατειχete*, or remember) what word (*τινι λογω*, in what manner, *Macknight*) I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain (*ικαη*)."
 Dr Macknight paraphrases the first clause, "By which Gospel also ye have the knowledge and means of salvation." But many enjoy the means of salvation who are not saved, in the scriptural sense of the word. The same critic renders *ικαη*, *rashly*, and explains it, "unless ye have believed without knowing for what reason." But though it is true that the word is sometimes used in this sense, (Matt. v. 22.) yet it cannot be denied, that there is a *dead inoperative* faith, which is utterly vain, (James ii. 17.) A temporary assent may be given to the truth, by those who afterwards apostatize, (John ii. 23. 2 Peter ii. 20.) The hope of salvation is always connected with our continuing in the faith. Hence the Apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, says, (chap. ii. 1.) "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

The great truths to which he directed their attention, in the *first instance*, and as of the *first importance*, respected the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. On *these*, the whole system of Christianity was built, and no facts could be better attested. Of the certainty of these events, he had been assured by divine revelation, as well as by the testimony of human witnesses; they were also confirmed by the predictions of the Old Testament. But in asserting the death of Christ, he did not represent it as a mere *historical fact*—he did not adduce it merely as proving the sincerity of our Lord as a *teacher*; but, agreeably to the general tenor of scripture, he declared that our Saviour had died as *an atonement for sin*. 3. "For I delivered to you, among the first things (*αρχαις*), that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins (*υπερ των αμαρτιων ημων*) according to the Scriptures." The writings of Moses and the prophets, prove the *necessity* of a propitiatory sacrifice, to remove the guilt of sin, and to satisfy the justice of God—they likewise foretel the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty. This is implied in the original promise made to our first parents respecting the seed of the woman: "He

shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel, (Gen. iii. 15.)" The command of God to Abraham, respecting the offering up of Isaac, (chap. xxii. 2.) was an evident type of the sacrifice of Christ—the whole system of Levitical sacrifices intimated, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." (Heb. ix. 22.) In the 40th Psalm, the Messiah is represented as coming to accomplish the will of God, which sacrifice and offering could not effect, (ver. 6, 8. Heb. x. 8—10.) The evangelical prophet, Isaiah, is very explicit on this subject, chap. liii. "He was wounded for our transgressions—he was bruised for our iniquities—the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," &c. ver. 6. Daniel foretold, that after seventy weeks were accomplished, (or 490 years), the Messiah should be *cut off*, but not for himself, (chap. ix. 26.) The same truth is taught, Zech. xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow: Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," &c. (See Matt. xxvi. 31.) The Apostle likewise taught that our Saviour was *laid in the grave*, as being actually dead, and that he rose again on the third day;—these events were also the subject of prophecy. 4. "And that he was buried, and that he rose (again) on the third day, according to the Scriptures." The *burial* of Christ is foretold, Isa. liii. 9. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;" or, according to Bishop Lowth's translation, "His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb." Accordingly, we are informed, that Joseph of Arimathea, a *rich man*, and a counsellor, laid him in his own new tomb, John xix, 38—41. The *resurrection* of Christ is clearly foretold in the same passage: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands," (Isa. liii. 10.) So Ps. xvi. 10. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, (or in the place of the dead), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This prediction was successfully appealed to, by the apostle Peter, on the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 25—31. So also Isaiah xxvi. 19.) Nor is the time of our Lord's resurrection obscurely intimated in prophecy. The deliverance of Jonah after being *three days* imprisoned in the belly of the fish, was a type of Christ's resurrection on the third day, (Matt. xii. 40.) The prophet Hosea seems to refer to the same

event, chap. vi. 2. "In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." This is also implied in his not being left to see *corruption*; he repeatedly foretold it himself, (Matt. xvi. 21. &c.) By this event, his sacrifice was proved to have been acceptable, and all the doctrines he had taught were divinely confirmed. Hence, he is said to have been "raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25.)

But the fact of his resurrection did not rest merely on the authority of the *prophetic writings*. It was established by the testimony of eye-witnesses, who openly published it to the world. This formed *another* branch of the Apostle's teaching: 5, 6. "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, afterwards he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater number (*οἱ πολλοί*) remain until now, but some are fallen asleep." The appearing of Christ to *Peter*, is referred to, Luke xxiv. 34: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." By thus appearing *first* to one who had denied him, he magnified the riches of his grace, and afforded to the penitent Apostle, an assurance of pardon. He appeared to the *other Apostles* on several occasions, when they were assembled together. (Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19, 26; xxi. 1.) The apostles are called *the twelve*, though their number was no longer complete; but this, like the ancient *decemviri*, &c. was a name of *office*. According to previous appointment, he appeared to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, on which occasion it is probable "more than five hundred" of the disciples were collected; most of these were still alive when this Epistle was written, and could therefore attest the fact, though some had *fallen asleep* in Jesus, in the faith of a blessed resurrection. All these individuals continued firm in their testimony, though menaced with persecution and death. 7. "Then he was seen of James, then by all the apostles." This appearance to James is not mentioned by the Evangelists. It is not known for what particular reason *he* was thus honoured. If we suppose this to be the brother of John, it might be to prepare him for his early martyrdom. (Acts xii. 2.) According to others, James the Lord's brother, or cousin, is meant; for the other Apostle of that name was dead long before the date of this letter. The additional particulars here recorded, which are not found in the Gospel history, render the two accounts more natural, than if they had agreed in every point. This confirms the

authenticity of both. The appearance to *all the apostles*, may refer to the occasion of our Saviour's ascension, though others undoubtedly were present. (Luke xxiv. 50—53.)

The Apostle next mentions our Lord's appearing to *himself*, several years afterwards, on the road to Damascus. This was his last appearance on earth, in a visible and glorious manner, though he was seen *in vision*, on other occasions, by several of the apostles: 8. "And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time (*ἡτεροπαις*)."¹ Paul alludes to this event with great humility; he calls himself an *abortion*, not only, as he was not included in the original number of the twelve, but on account of his *former character*, as a persecutor and blasphemer. The term is expressive of *worthlessness*, and is applied to a weakly child, born before its time. This sentiment he accordingly amplifies in the following verse: 9. "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy, or fit, (*ἀνάξιος*) to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." This great man, though so eminently distinguished by natural talents, acquired learning, supernatural endowments, extraordinary zeal, and unexampled success, never lost sight of his former opposition to the truth—never could forgive himself for his injurious treatment of the saints of God—never could sufficiently extol the riches of that grace which had been displayed on his behalf. He was content with the *lowest place* among the apostles of Christ; nay, he viewed himself as unworthy of the name. In another place, he calls himself "*less than the least of all saints*," (Ephes. iii. 8.) But though, in respect of his former character, he was, in his own estimation, the *least* of the apostles; yet in regard to ministerial qualifications, he was not behind the *chief* of the apostles.

A remarkable change had since taken place in the character of Paul. This he would ascribe, not to any inherent virtue of his own, or to the exertions of any human instrument, but to the power of divine grace, which had made him what he now was: 10. "But by the grace of God I am what I am." Nor was the grace thus imparted, *ineffectual*; it had supplied him with suitable qualifications, and had inspired him with fortitude and zeal to preach the Gospel, in many distant countries, and amidst many trials and discouragements. Thus he surpassed *all* the apostles, in the extent and success of his ministerial labours: "His grace that

was (bestowed) on me was not vain (*εἰς*); but I laboured (*ἐκένωσα*) more abundantly than they all." He did not, however, wish to arrogate any merit to himself, in what he had done; he was merely the *instrument* by which the Almighty wrought, who made his strength perfect in Paul's weakness, and clothed his word with power. "It was not I (who laboured with such success,) but the grace of God that was with me." It has been observed, that the word grace (*χάρις*) is used in three different senses in this passage; first, to describe the sovereign *favour* of God in calling the Apostle: secondly, for the *qualifications* bestowed on him for his office; and thirdly, for the divine *assistance* which accompanied his labours. These were, in fact, different expressions of the same undeserved favour. How carefully does the Apostle preserve the honour of the divine prerogative! But whoever were the instruments employed, the doctrine of Paul, and of the other apostles, was *the same*; consequently the faith of their hearers was one. Now, they must be aware that the resurrection of the dead formed one of the principal topics of their discourse. 11. "Whether then it were I or they, so (or thus, *οὕτως*) we preach, and thus ye believed."

REFLECTIONS.

1. By how many proofs is the fact of Christ's resurrection confirmed! The apostles were competent witnesses of this truth. They must have known their divine Master personally, from their long intercourse with him. They were far from being prejudiced in *favour* of such an opinion. All their previous conceptions leaned another way. It was with difficulty they could be persuaded of the fact, and not till our Saviour had appealed to the evidence of their senses, (Luke xxiv. 39. John xx. 27.) The testimony of the *women* is not adduced in this passage, because they were not appointed to be public witnesses, but it materially strengthens the proof of the event. The primitive teachers of Christianity constantly asserted this fact, and their testimony never was disproved. On the contrary, it every where obtained credit. This was particularly the case in *Jerusalem* and the surrounding regions, where the event was said to have happened, and where there was every facility of ascertaining the truth.

The Jewish council took no judicial steps to refute the allegation of the apostles. They attempted merely to *impose silence* upon them by authority. The story which they put into the mouth of the Roman guards refutes itself. These were stationed to *watch* the sepulchre, and pretended that, while they were asleep, the disciples of Christ stole away his body. But how could they know what took place while they slept? Was it likely that a few timid men, unprotected, would have attempted such an enterprize. And did not the soldiers risk their life by confessing that they had *slept* while on guard? It has been asked, why did our Lord not make himself known to the Jewish *multitude*? The answer is, that they had already resisted the evidence of miracles. They would have ascribed the appearance to imposture. They had already forfeited all claim to further proof of our Saviour's mission. It was sufficient if a *reasonable number* of witnesses were convinced of the fact. Now, we have seen that no less than 500 persons were, at one time, spectators of their risen Lord. *They* were sufficiently able to judge of a matter of fact which was submitted to their senses. They and the other witnesses stood firm in their assertion, in the midst of persecution, and many of them sealed their testimony with their blood. What interest had they to deceive the world? Were they persons whose moral character rendered their declaration unworthy of credit? Those who knew them best, never presumed to charge them with wickedness.* Let us rejoice that the Lord is risen indeed. He has burst the bands of death; he has opened a path-way from the tomb to the regions of immortality. How august the circumstances attending his resurrection! An angel rolls away the stone. At the appearance of the heavenly messenger, the hardy Roman veterans are afraid, and become as dead men. Two of the celestial host are seen sitting within the tomb, one at the head and another at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain; while the linen clothes are laid in order, as they had been left by *him* who had now put on the garments of immortality.

* The accounts of our Lord's resurrection given by the four Evangelists, are beautifully harmonized in a very able work on the subject, by the late Gilbert West, Esq.

"Death is no more the king of dread
Since our Immanuel rose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.

See how the conq'ror mounts aloft
And to his Father flies,
With scars of honour in his flesh,
And triumph in his eyes."

2. Let us rejoice that Jesus died "for our sins, according to the Scriptures." Let this blessed truth be preached *first of all*. Let us never lose sight of the great doctrines connected with the resurrection of Christ. He only that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Let us often reflect on our former character before we knew the grace of God in truth. This will serve to repress vanity, and to excite to diligence. By the ardour of our love and the abundance of our labours, we shall best evince our gratitude. Happy the man who can say with the Apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Without *this* grace we should still have been living in unbelief and sin. Every faithful pastor will watch over the souls of his people; he will mark with concern the progress of error or infidelity, and he will strive to bring them back to the true faith, which he at first declared, and by which alone they can be saved.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—22.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

THE Apostle, in proceeding to prove the doctrine of a general resurrection, had referred to the resurrection of Christ, as a fact which was established by many infallible proofs. It was, as already observed, of great importance to insist on this argument, as the doctrine had been frequently asserted by our Lord, during his personal ministry, and he himself rose as the representative of his redeemed people, of whose resurrection, *his own* was at

once the pattern and the pledge. In fact, this truth was the grand subject of apostolic preaching, and the main pillar of the christian system. It was also a truth which the Corinthians themselves *believed*. Now, this being the case, so far as the resurrection of *Christ* was concerned, how could any persons bearing the Christian name, venture to deny that article of the faith, which respects the resurrection of *believers in general*? 12. "But if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, (or, as the words are arranged by M'Knight, 'if it be preached that Christ was raised,') how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" By the persons here alluded to, the Apostle may mean, either certain false teachers who had intruded into the church, or, as the words seem rather to imply, some of the Corinthians themselves, who had embraced philosophical subtleties, by which they explained away the doctrine in question. Were such persons aware to what consequences such an opinion would lead? It would equally militate against the fact of the resurrection of Christ. If such a revival of the body were *impossible* in the one case, why might it not be so in the other? Or if it were *unsuitable* to the dignity of the Christian character to indulge the hope of being raised from the grave, would the Son of God have risen with the same body in which he had died? Therefore, "if there be no resurrection of the dead, neither is Christ risen," 13. This was not the only consequence; for if it were admitted, for a moment, that the Saviour was still in the grave, all that the apostles had taught, and all that the Corinthians had believed, was an idle tale, which would profit neither the teachers nor the taught. 14. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." In this case, it would be better for the apostles to abandon their office altogether, and for private christians at once to renounce their profession, and to treat the christian doctrine with that contempt which it deserved. For so far from the apostles being the *honest* and upright men they pretended to be, who were willing to sacrifice their life in defence of the truth, they would be shameless and unprincipled impostors, who, by claiming a divine commission, offered the greatest indignity to the character of God, and the most serious injury to their fellow-men. 15. "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of, or concerning, God, (*ψευδομαρτυροῦντες τοῦ Θεοῦ*) because we have testified of, (or against) God, (*κατὰ τοῦ*

Θεοῦ) that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not, if truly (*ἀγα*) the dead do not rise, (*ἐγερταί*, are not raised)." The apostles professed, as witnesses *for God*, to communicate faithfully his divine will to the world; and they confirmed their testimony by miracles wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit. But could it for a moment be supposed, that God would set his seal to a falsehood, or employ one class of men to deceive their fellows, on points of the utmost importance and deepest interest? Or would they assert that the apostles only *pretended* to a divine commission, in order more successfully to propagate a system of *their own invention*? How could they be sufficiently exposed and detested, if this were the case? what language could afford terms sufficiently strong to reprobate their character and principles? There was still *another* consequence that would follow from the supposition that there is no resurrection. The Apostle would again repeat, that this would involve the denial of our Lord's resurrection: 16. "For if the dead rise not, neither is Christ risen (*ἐγερται*):" But if this were indeed true, what condition would christians be in? They would derive no advantage from the belief of the Gospel; they would remain *as before*, under the guilt and condemnation of sin: 17. "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain (*ματαια*), ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection of Christ proved that his sacrifice was accepted, and that divine justice was satisfied with the atonement made by his blood. But if he were still in the grave, the very reverse was the fact. Doubt and uncertainty would rest on all that he had taught; the curse of the law was obviously not removed; and no hope could be entertained of acceptance with God through his mediatorial undertaking. The surety being still *in prison*, the debt was evidently not discharged, and the original debtor was still liable to be called to account. It is evident that the Gospel had already effected a *moral reformation* on the minds of the Corinthians, yet the Apostle did not consider this as sufficient for their salvation. On the contrary, without an *atonement*, he supposes that they would remain in their original state of condemnation. Such is obviously the meaning of being "yet in their sins." (Compare John viii. 24.)

18. The condition of *departed saints* would be also most hopeless: "Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ (*οἱ Χριστοῖ*) have perished." They had joyfully embraced the Gospel; they

had been supported by it, under many trials; many of them had even laid down their lives in its defence, or had, in the ordinary course of nature, fallen asleep in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection. But how great would be their disappointment, were this doctrine untrue! Instead of being entirely delivered from the consequences of sin, they would continue for ever under its condemning power; instead of departing to be with Christ, they would be shut up in the prison of divine justice; instead of being able to look forward to a reunion with the body, their souls must remain in a separate state, the body, being, on this supposition, doomed to perish irrecoverably. Nay, there could be no certainty of the *immortality of the soul* itself, if the hope of the resurrection were removed, for they both rest on the same foundation of revealed truth. Dr M'Knight interprets the first clause, "those who have fallen asleep for Christ," as if the passage referred to martyrs; but there is no necessity for thus *limiting* the sense. The expression is parallel with that in Rev. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." And what would be the condition of the *apostles themselves*, and many other primitive christians? Certainly most deplorable. 19. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are more miserable (*ἀλυστῆρες*) than all men." They had abandoned the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, without any adequate recompense; they had incurred many dangers, and much reproach in preaching the Gospel: and could it be supposed that the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ had been invented by them, *knowing it to be untrue*, to serve as a basis for a false religion, they would suffer all the agonies of an accusing conscience; they must view themselves as the basest of criminals, and they would be treated with marked severity, in the future world, by that God whose name they had profaned, and whose servants they pretended to be. It is not necessary to suppose that the Apostle here lays it down as a general principle, that if Christianity be untrue, the christian is the most wretched of men. For godliness has the promise of the life that *now* is; and the sufferings to which it exposes, and the self-denial which it demands, are amply compensated by the peace and comfort which it inspires. But it cannot be denied that a great part of this happiness arises from the *hope* of future glory. Were this removed, it might even be doubted whether a christian has the advantage of other men, and his ultimate dis-

appointment would be proportionably great, according to the vigour of his hope in this life. (*See Mr Russell's Essay on Infant Salvation*, p. 57.) The Scriptures do not represent virtue as being its *own reward*, which would be a sentiment too refined for the generality of men.

20. The Apostle, however, would not dwell longer on such gloomy and appalling considerations. For the resurrection of Christ was a fact which could not be denied, and the resurrection of his people followed as a *consequence*. His resurrection is the earnest of theirs: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, (and) is become the first fruits (*απαρχη*) of them that are asleep."* There is here an allusion to the presenting of the first fruits, under the law, on the day following the Sabbath of the passover: then the people of Israel were commanded to bring a sheaf of the first fruits of their harvest, and to wave the sheaf before the Lord, (Levit. xxiii. 10, 11.) On the day *there specified*, our Saviour rose from the dead. Now, as the first fruits sanctified and secured the future harvest, so the resurrection of Christ afforded a sure pledge of the revival of his saints in their appointed season. He was the first who rose to die no more—a proof that such a resurrection is possible. In this he acted as the representative of the church, and forms a striking contrast to our first progenitor. By the disobedience of the *first* man, death passed upon all;—by the righteousness of the *second* Adam, what was lost is restored, and the body is ransomed from the power of the grave.

21. "For since by a man (*δι' ἀνθρώπου*) came death, by a man also comes the resurrection of the dead." Eternal life was lost by one in human nature: hence we perceive the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, in restoring it by means of *one* who appeared in fashion as a man." This is more explicitly stated in the following verse: 22. "For as in Adam (*ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ*) all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." All mankind being represented by the first Adam, were involved in the consequences of his fall. They died *in him* spiritually, and from him they inherit death, temporal and eternal. On the other hand, all who are *in Christ*, represented by him and united to him, are made partakers of spiritual life, and are constituted heirs of eternal fe-

* Some omit the substantive verb *ἐστίν*, and simply read, "the first fruits of them that sleep." (*See Griesbach.*) Thus the Vulgate, "*primitiæ dormientium.*"

licity.* The *imputation* of Adam's sin, and of Christ's righteousness, seems to be clearly taught in Scripture. The reasoning of the Apostle, in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, can be explained only on this principle. He calls the first Adam a type of him that was to come, ver. 14.; he shews that as, by the *offence of one*, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the *righteousness of one*, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made (*καταστάθηναι*, were constituted) sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," ver. 18, 19. It is observable that those who deny the imputation of Adam's sin, are generally reduced to the necessity of denying the imputation of Christ's righteousness; and in this they are consistent, for according to the Apostle's reasoning they must stand or fall together. The imputation of the punishment, implies the imputation of the sin. The *former* we actually see to be transferred, Gen. iii. 16, 17. The expression, *ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ*, is translated by some, "by (or by means of) Adam," as if all mankind did not virtually die in him as their representative, but were merely involved, in consequence of his fall, in the suffering of death. But it has been justly observed, that the Apostle had already shewn, that death came "through man (*δι' ἀνθρώπου*)," so that, according to this view, the 22d verse would be merely a repetition of the same idea; which would charge his language with an unmeaning tautology. It has been further noticed that the words *ἐν Χριστῷ*, are generally translated *in Christ*, as in this same chapter, verses 18, 19. In other words, men are not only liable to death in consequence of Adam's fall, but because in him they sinned, and were therefore condemned to die. Death is represented not merely as a debt of nature, but as the penalty of sin; but as we see death reigning even over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, (namely) over *infants*; they must be viewed as legally guilty; not by their own act, for by the supposition they have not personally sinned, but by their federal relation to the first Adam, (Rom. v. 14.) The late Dr Dwight adopts the rendering here objected to; and the reader will find

* Thus Milton,

"As in him perish'd all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restor'd
As many as are restor'd—without thee none."

PAR. LOST, b. 4. v. 287.

an able defence of the common reading, in Note 7. of the Appendix to Mr Fraser's Translation of Witsius on the Creed, (vol. 2. p. 294.) The whole of the translator's notes on this work, are well entitled to an attentive perusal. The last clause in this verse is thus paraphrased by M'Knight: "So also by Christ all men shall be made alive, that in the body all may receive reward or punishment, according to what they have done in the body." But it is of *believers only* that the Apostle here discourses, as is evident from the expression, *in Christ*, and from the whole context. The resurrection of the wicked can scarcely be called *being made alive*; it is spoken of under the figure of a second death. The Apostle is contrasting the effects of Adam's fall, with those of Christ's obedience; consequently to be *made alive* must be viewed as a blessing. It has been doubted, whether there would have been any resurrection, but by the mediation of Christ. It is vain, however, to speculate on what *might have been*, when the divine economy is already revealed.—The salvation of those who die in infancy seems to be implied in this passage. The redemption of Christ is proclaimed to all; and those only who *reject* it, lose the benefit; but infants have no opportunity of being saved, unless they are included in the general dispensation of mercy. They cannot be said to disobey the Gospel; and it seems agreeable to our views of the infinite goodness of God, to suppose that, as they are liable to temporal death, without any *fault of their own*, by their connection with the *first Adam*; so they shall be made heirs of eternal life, without any *merit of their own*, through the mediation of the second Adam. As for those who die in a state of *heathenism*, they shall be judged by the law of natural conscience, (Rom. ii. 12, 15.) On the subject of infant salvation, the reader is referred to the Essay above quoted, by Mr David Russell of Dundee, where every thing that can be advanced on this difficult point, is brought forward.

REFLECTIONS.

1. It behoves us seriously to consider how far certain doctrines will lead us, when carried out to their legitimate consequences. The denial of one part of the christian system, must shake the whole superstructure of revealed truth. Thus, those who reject the doctrine of a *resurrection*, often proceed to deny the immortality of the soul, and thence are led, by an easy transition, into

atheism. How cheering the thought, that the resurrection of the just is as certain as that of Christ! Those who are fallen asleep in him, are not perished—why should we sorrow for them as others who have no hope?

“Why should we tremble to convey
Their bodies to the tomb?
There the exalted Saviour lay,
And cheer’d its dreary gloom.

“The graves of all his saints he bless’d,
And soften’d every bed;
Where should the dying members rest
But with their dying Head?”

2. How wretched are those who derive all their comfort from this life! Soon its enjoyments and its hopes shall pass away—the brittle thread of existence shall be broken—the body shall return to the dust, whence it was taken—and how shall the soul appear before its God? The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death. Let us trust in Him who is the resurrection and the life—he that believeth in him shall never die.

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 23—34.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In the foregoing verses, the Apostle had represented the resurrection of believers as a consequence of the resurrection of Christ. This he had illustrated by comparing our Lord to the *first fruits* presented at the Jewish altar, as the earnest of the general harvest. Now, as it was forbidden to use any part of the produce of the land *before* this offering was made, (Lev. xxiii. 14.) so there is a natural and becoming *order* observed in gathering in this spiritual harvest: 23. “But every one in his own rank (*ο καθ’ ἑαυτον τάγματι*); Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Every individual shall rise in his

own proper band or company, as the word *ταγμα* signifies, being applied to the drawing up of soldiers in their ranks. Christ, the first fruits, has *already* been presented to the Lord, by his resurrection and ascension; then, at his second appearing, he shall raise those who have been given to him to be redeemed by his blood; who were united to him by true faith, and had departed, in the hope of meeting him in glory. These shall be gathered in, like the precious wheat, into his store-house: A *change* shall *afterwards* take place on the bodies of those who shall be alive on the earth at that eventful period, so as to fit them for the enjoyment and the exercises of the heavenly kingdom, (verses 51, 52.); for those who remain at the coming of Christ, "shall not prevent or come before (*φθασωμεν*) them that are asleep," (1 Thess. iv. 15); *lastly*, the bodies of the wicked shall be raised to shame and everlasting contempt, (Dan. xii. 2.) Thus shall the *various divisions* of this vast multitude, be successively delivered from the power of death and the grave. 24. "Then shall be the end (*ὅτε το τέλος*), when he shall deliver up the kingdom (*παρεδωκεν*) to God, even the Father (*τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρί*), when he shall abolish (*καταργήσει* destroy) all government (*αρχὴν*), and all authority (*ἐξουσίαν*) and power (*δυναμειν*)." The end here spoken of is elsewhere called the consummation or restitution (*ἀποκαταστάσις*) of all things, (Acts iii. 21.) So our Lord says, (Matt. xxiv. 14.) "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall *the end* (*το τέλος*) come." The earth and the works thereof shall then be burnt up, (2 Pet. iii. 10). the present apparent disorders and inequalities in the moral government of the world, shall be rectified—the sorrows and infirmities of the people of God shall be done away—the triumph of the wicked shall come to a close, and the means of grace shall be no longer necessary. In particular, the *mediatorial kingdom* of Christ shall cease, which he received as the reward of his sufferings (Phil. ii. 9.), and which he now administers for the benefit of his church. By virtue of his exaltation as Mediator, all power is committed to him in heaven and on earth. He rules in the midst of his enemies—subdues the hearts of sinners to himself—promotes the interests of truth and righteousness, and gathers in his elect, who are scattered throughout the world. When their number is completed, then he will present *the subjects of the kingdom* to his Father, as the trophies of his victory, and the purchase of his blood. The Gospel shall then have triumph-

ed over all opposition—the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ—the empire of superstition, ignorance, idolatry, and wickedness shall be overthrown—Satan and his rebel host shall be cast out, and *every power* that exalteth itself against the heavenly Saviour, shall be *put down*. The man of sin shall be destroyed, by the spirit of the Lord; and the false prophet shall no more be permitted to deceive the nations. We must carefully distinguish between the *absolute* and the *mediatorial* dominion of Jesus Christ. The *former* belongs to him as a Divine Person—is from everlasting to everlasting—unchangeable and universal. The *latter* is received from the Father—is temporary in its purpose and in its duration—has a special reference to the good of the church, and is administered to the glory of the Father. *This kingdom* shall be “delivered up,” when there are no longer any enemies to subdue—any souls to pardon—to sanctify, and to bring to glory, when in short, all the designs embraced in the plan of redemption are fully accomplished.

This is agreeable to the language of ancient prophecy. Referring to Ps. cx. 1., the Apostle observes, that it was the fixed purpose of God, that the Messiah should continue in the exercise of his mediatorial power, till all his enemies were finally subdued. 25. “For he must (*du*) reign, till he hath put (*th*) all enemies under his feet.” This expression denotes *complete subjugation*. Thus Joshua commanded the captains of his forces to put their feet on the necks of the captive kings of Canaan, (chap. x. 24.) The passage here alluded to, is frequently quoted by our Lord, as a proof of his *Deity*: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” (Matt. xxii. 44.) It is adduced, with the same view, by the Apostle, in Heb. i. 13. The words here used, imply that this is an *end* which cannot possibly fail of its accomplishment; all attempts to defeat it must prove hopeless. “His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.” Whatever be the number, the rank, the subtilty, or the efforts of his enemies, they must yield; for to *him* every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. Even that great and terrible foe, who is justly denominated the King of Terrors, and who has so long spread ruin and desolation over the face of the world, shall be completely overthrown. 26. “The last enemy shall be destroyed (*καταργηται*), death.” There is a

peculiar emphasis in placing the word *death* last in the sentence. Our received translation weakens the expression by the supplement: "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death." It has been observed, that this implies, there are some enemies who shall not be destroyed. Death is styled an *enemy*, as being the punishment of sin—as it naturally inspires us with dread, (Heb. ii. 15.)—as it puts a period to all our present enjoyments—as it rends asunder the most tender ties—and as it reduces the bodies, even of the saints, to corruption and dust. It is called, the *last* enemy, because it entered last in the train of sin; because it harasses the christian through life, and is the last obstacle to his happiness. It shall be destroyed—its power and terror shall be neutralized; for in heaven there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. The Apostle justly argues, that death is one of those enemies who are to be subdued by the Messiah; for to destroy *him* was the great end of his coming, (Heb. ii. 14.)

27. It is evident, from another passage of a similar nature, that the Lord Jesus was to be invested with *universal dominion*. "For he hath subdued (*ὑποτάξας*) all things under his feet." This is a direct quotation from Ps. viii. 6., which describes the glorious exaltation of the *second* Adam, in figures taken from the creation and primitive dignity of the *first*. It is observable, that the Apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, adduces the same passage of Scripture to illustrate the exaltation of Christ (Heb. ii. 6, 8.), on which he makes the following comment: "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." It is evident, from these references, that the Jews interpreted this Psalm as describing the kingdom of the Messiah. It is true, as the Apostle observes in the verse last quoted, "We see not yet all things put under him;" but the verb is put in the *past tense*, according to the prophetic idiom, to intimate the absolute certainty of the event. Of course, when this universal subjugation is spoken of, created beings *alone* are meant. "But when he says that all things are put under him, it is evident (*δηλον*) that there is an exception of him who hath put all things under him." It could not be supposed that the Almighty Father would surrender his own proper dignity, for *from him* the glory of Christ, as Mediator, is derived. He *all along* sustained the Majesty of the Godhead, and shall ultimately

resume the sovereign authority of the universal empire. For the Divine Mediator, having completed his gracious undertaking, and accomplished all the ends of his mission, shall cheerfully resign his *delegated power*, and shall appear, in human nature, as the head of the redeemed family, in subordination to the Father. Thus God himself, in the unity of the divine essence, shall be the immediate object of worship, and the source of spiritual life and happiness to every creature. 28. "Now, when all things are subjected to him, then shall the Son himself (*αὐτὸς ὁ υἱός*) also be subject (*υποτασσόμενος*,) to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (*ὥς πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ*)." This does not destroy the distinction of persons in the Godhead. The Apostle does not say that the *Father* may be all in all, but that *God*, that is, the Deity, essentially considered, may be all in all. The church, being now freed from all imperfection and danger, the *separate exercise* of the mediatorial power will be no longer necessary: all the ends of its establishment will be fully attained.* This does not imply, as some have imagined, that the Saviour will become a *private character*. He will be for ever distinguished from all creatures, by the constitution of his person, by the glory of his undertaking, and by his relation to the church as her Head. Nor does it imply that he will in *every sense* cease to reign, any more than his previous exaltation supposed the sovereignty of the Father to be affected: his throne is expressly said to be *for ever*, and his dominion that which shall not pass away. On the Arian and Socinian schemes, the language of the Apostle is inexplicable. If the Son were only a *creature*, in what sense could he be said to exercise supreme dominion? yet his becoming subject to the Father is spoken of as an event still future, and as a striking proof of the excellence and goodness of his character. On this difficult passage of Scripture, some valuable observations will be found in Note 61. of the Appendix to the 1st vol. of Fraser's Translation of Witnias on the Creed.

The Apostle now states some *other consequences* that would re-

* This sentiment is well expressed by the great English Poet ;

" Then thou thy regal sceptre shall lay by ;
For regal sceptre then no more shall need ;
God shall be all in all."

PAR. LOST, b. 3. line 339.

sult from the denial of the resurrection. The 29th verse has been variously interpreted, and is still involved in some degree of obscurity. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, (οἱ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν) if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?" Some have conceived that there is an allusion to the *washing* of dead bodies, as practiced by the ancients, as a part of the funeral rites; but the Apostle does not speak of *the dead* being washed or baptized, but of those who are baptized *for* (or on account of) the dead. Others suppose there is a reference to the custom which seems at one time to have prevailed, of baptizing living persons *in the place* of those who had died before this ordinance had been administered to them; but this was the superstitious invention of a later age, and would scarcely have been mentioned by the Apostle without reprehension. Others think it refers to those who came forward, immediately after the death or martyrdom of a christian, to *profess their faith*, and fill up the ranks. According to others, it alludes to the profession of faith in the resurrection of Christ, and of the saints in general, made by those who were baptized. The Roman Catholic annotators, interpret it agreeably to their own system, as referring "to the prayers and penitential labours performed by the primitive christians, for the souls of the faithful departed;" but there is no evidence that such acts of penance were then either observed or prescribed. Dr McKnight paraphrases the words: "What shall they do who are immersed in sufferings for testifying the resurrection of the dead?" But there seems no good reason for attaching a figurative meaning to the word *baptize* in this passage. I am therefore inclined to adopt the opinion of those, who think the Apostle alludes to the case of persons who had been deprived, by death, of beloved christian friends, and who were first led to embrace the Gospel on account of the noble views it presents of eternal happiness. Thus they might be said to be baptized *on account of the dead*, as the preposition ὑπὲρ generally signifies; in the hope of meeting their departed relatives in the heavenly world. Were there no resurrection of the dead, what reason would such individuals have to embrace the Gospel? I am indebted for this thought, to a valuable Essay, which appeared some years ago, in the Missionary Magazine, which gives, I think, the true sense of the passage. Besides, were this doctrine untrue, why should the apostles and other

christian teachers constantly endanger their lives to no purpose, in support of a falsehood? 30. "Why are we also in danger (*καὶ ὁ κίνδυνος ἡμῶν*) every hour?" By ceasing to preach this doctrine, they might enjoy the same ease and reputation as other men. For his own part, the Apostle declared, that he was daily exposed to the most cruel persecutions, and grievous hardships, in defence of the doctrine here maintained. This he solemnly confirms by an appeal to the joy which he *himself* derived from the Gospel, or which the happy conversion of the Corinthians afforded him. 31. "I protest (*ἐγὼ*) by your rejoicing (*τῇ ὑμῶν καυχῇ*) which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." This is well rendered by McKnight, the rejoicing or *boasting concerning you*. Some indeed suppose that the original reading was *ἡμῶν*, "*our rejoicing*." (See Griesbach). This would render the expression more simple, were the alteration sufficiently warranted.

It is not certainly known what event is alluded to in the 32d verse. "If after the manner of men (*κατὰ ἀνθρώπου*) I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, (*ἀθροισμαχῶν*), what advantage have I if the dead rise not?" From a subsequent passage (chap. xvi. 8.) it appears that the Apostle was now at Ephesus: and it is supposed by some, that he had literally been exposed to fight with wild beasts in the theatre of that city, according to the barbarous custom of the times, as was afterwards the case with Ignatius; but it has been observed, that such an event would hardly have been passed over in silence by the sacred historian, in the Acts. According to others, he refers to the opposition which he had there met with, from the violence of wicked men; accordingly he observes, (chap. xvi. 9.) "there were many adversaries" in Ephesus. In the same manner, speaking of his acquittal before the Emperor Nero, he says, (2 Tim. iv. 17.) "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." The tumult raised by Demetrius does not seem to have taken place till some time *after* the date of this letter; for we find him (chap. xvi. 8.) proposing to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost; whereas it appears from Acts xx. 1. that immediately after the riot above mentioned, he departed into Macedonia. But perhaps he only makes the supposition, that *had he fought* in this manner in defence of the Gospel, it *would have been* no advantage to him, were there no resurrection or future state; and the expression (*κατὰ ἀνθρώπου*) "*after the manner of men*"

seems to confirm this figurative interpretation. In that case, the Epicurean maxim would be worthy of credit, that, as there is no hereafter, man's chief happiness and true wisdom consist in indulging his sensual appetites without restraint, while he enjoys this short life. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." This seems a quotation from Isaiah xxii. 13., where the prophet is reproving the infatuation of the sensual Jews under the threatenings of divine vengeance. The same sentiment is often referred to in the book of Ecclesiastes, not in the way of approbation, as some have supposed, but to expose its emptiness, (chap. viii. 15. &c.) It also frequently occurs in heathen writers. Thus Horace, book i. ode 4.

"O beate Sesti,

Vitæ cunctis brevis spes nos vetat inchoare longam : &c.

"O happy Sestius! the short period of life forbids us to form long expectations."

So, addressing Leuconoë, he says,

"Sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi

Spem longam reseces ; dum loquimur, fugerit invida

Ætas, carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.

"Be wise ; rack off your wines ; and abridge your long hope in proportion to our short space ; whilst we speak, envious age has been flying, seize the (present) day : trust the following one as little as possible."

A love of sensual pleasure leads many to embrace infidelity. The words before us, are the *practical* language of multitudes, who profess to believe in the immortality of the soul.

REFLECTIONS.

"How sure a pledge does this passage afford, of the universal diffusion of the Gospel ! In vain do the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Christ. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to ends of the earth : they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. How great shall be the joy of that day, when the Son of

God shall deliver up the subjects of his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, saying, "behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me." Then shall the church appear altogether glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless," (2 Pet. iii. 14.)

2. But how lamentable the condition of the finally impenitent! They must, as the enemies of Christ, be put under his feet. What will avail their rule and authority and power! "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord *alone* shall be exalted in that day," (Isa. ii. 17.) Let them, without delay, throw down the weapons of their rebellion. Let them no longer think of maintaining an unequal contest with Omnipotence. Let them "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!" (Ps. ii. 12.)

SECTION FOURTH.—VERSES 33—44.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

THE Apostle, having asserted the doctrine of the resurrection of the just, proceeds to warn the Corinthians against the specious arguments and subtle attempts of those who might seek to unhinge their minds, or shake their faith in this momentous point. He guards them against the danger of being deluded by the artful pretences of unbelievers. Referring to a passage in Menander, an ancient Greek poet, he reminds them of the natural tendency of familiar intercourse with persons of vicious habits, or infidel principles, to pollute and debase the mind. 33. "Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners (*φθαρουν ης χρησ' ομιλίας κακας*)" Many individuals who have been trained up in the principles of religion and virtue, and who have, for a course of years, preserved a blameless reputation, have been led astray by the influence of wicked companions, into the paths

of profligacy and impiety. Hence the earnest and frequent exhortations with which the scriptures abound, against the enticements of ungodly men. The book of Proverbs is especially useful to young persons on this account, (see chap. i. 10. ; iv. 14, 15. &c.) It is therefore of the utmost importance to fortify the youthful mind against the allurements of worldly company. There is a danger here which even a heathen writer could perceive, whose language the Holy Spirit does not disdain to appropriate, as expressing an important truth. Indeed, amidst much that is erroneous or trifling, many brilliant sentiments occur in the ancient classic authors. He further exhorts his brethren at Corinth to *rouse themselves* from their sinful and foolish speculations, in a *righteous manner*, and as became righteous men, to a consideration of the danger they were in of embracing destructive errors, and of provoking the divine displeasure. 34. "Awake righteously (ἐκνήψατε δικαίως, as is right or fit) and sin not." At present it was too apparent that *some* among them, by their captious objections against a resurrection of the dead, had *no right conceptions of the character and perfections of the Divine Being*; they were evidently ignorant of his infinite wisdom, goodness and power, and of the transcendant grandeur of his dispensations, both in providence and in grace; and this he said to *humble* and reprove them for their improper attachment to false teachers, and to bring them to a right sense of the disgraceful part they were acting, in embracing such erroneous doctrines. "Some have not the knowledge (ἀγνοοῦσιν ἐχούσι) of God, I speak for shame (or reproof, ἐντροπή) of you."

Those who denied the resurrection of the body, started *two difficulties*, *first*, as to the *possibility* of such an event, and *secondly*, as to the *manner* of it. These objections the Apostle proceeds to answer. 35. "But some one will say, how are the dead raised up, (πῶς ἐγείρονται, how can they be raised, *M^c Knight*), and with what kind of body (ποῖω σώματι) do they come?" With regard to the *possibility* of a resurrection, he observes, in a style of keen but salutary reproof, that the objector, by putting such a question discovered only his ignorance and want of consideration; for daily proofs were afforded him, in the natural world, of a similar exertion of divine power. 36. "Thou foolish or thoughtless man, (ἄφρον) that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Referring to the process of vegetation, he desires the objector

to reflect on the remarkable change produced on grain, after it has been committed to the ground. To *all appearance* the seed consumes away, and only a small germ is preserved alive, from which, in its proper season, springs the future plant. A similar figure is employed by our Lord to illustrate the redemption of the world by his death, John xii. 24. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." There is a very great difference between the *grain* committed to the earth, and the *stalk* produced from it. The former has none of the parts which compose and distinguish the latter. From a *naked grain* of wheat, or of some other corn, springs first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. Yet all these were wrapt up in the small seminal particle contained in the body of the decayed grain. 37. "And what thou sowest, thou sowest not the body about to be (*σπένδεις*), but a bare grain (*σπυρίον κεκρυμμένον*) perhaps of wheat, or of some of the other kinds (*τῆς τῶν λαΐταιν*)." In what manner the different parts are unfolded and brought to maturity, by the influence of the soil, the rain, the sun, and the air, is to us utterly *inexplicable*, and must remain for ever a profound mystery. This is a kind of standing miracle, equally wonderful with many of those recorded in scripture, and yet, because it happens every year in the usual course of nature, it ceases to strike the beholder with surprize. Now, *without experience*, we should never have known that such an effect would follow. We may suppose a native of some distant country, who was entirely ignorant of the process of vegetation, to become acquainted, for the first time, with *wheat* as an *article of food*, and taken to a field where the operation of sowing was carrying on. He would be utterly at a loss to conceive the reason of throwing the seed away, and covering it with earth, and would consider the husbandman as acting a very foolish and unaccountable part. Even if told what would be the result, we may conceive him starting doubts from the apparent *impossibility* of the thing: but when we know the reality of the fact, respecting *vegetation*, how unreasonable to deny the possibility of a resurrection of the body, which is an exertion of almighty power in some respects similar! It is also remarkable, that every seed produces its *own kind*, so that wheat never springs from barley-seed or any other, and the labourer calculates on

this constancy of nature, with the utmost certainty. The same thing is true of every other vegetable, "whose seed is in itself, after its own kind." To what are we to ascribe this wonderful operation? Not to the wisdom of man—not to the effect of chance—not to the action of unconscious elements; but to the power of the great Creator. 38. "God giveth it a body as he hath pleased (*καθως ηθελησι*), and to every seed its own proper body."

Dr M'Knight concludes, from this passage, "that the body to be raised is not *numerically* the same with the body deposited at death, but something of the same kind formed by the energy of God." Had this learned critic said that the reasoning of the Apostle proves that the resurrection body shall not be *in all respects* the same with that we now possess, it would readily have been admitted; but the concession which he here makes to those who oppose the doctrine in question, on the ground of its incredibility, seems by far too great: it is evident, that if the resurrection body be not *numerically the same* with the present, it cannot be called a resurrection, but a new creation. The illustration in the text seems clearly to prove, that *so much* of the original frame shall be restored, as to maintain its identity.

The Apostle, in answer to the *second* question, "with what kind of body do they rise?" reminds the objector of the endless variety observable in the animal kingdom. 39. "All flesh is not the same flesh." The different *genera* of living creatures are possessed of bodies differently organized, and variously sustained. The *flesh* of which these bodies are composed, is differently constituted, so that we can commonly distinguish, by its colour or texture, to what creature it belongs. "There is one kind of flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of fishes and another of fowls." These different tribes are produced in various ways, are endowed with peculiar instincts, they are fitted for the different elements in which they live, and the diversified ends of their formation. The different species are also preserved *distinct* by an universal law, so that whatever temporary confusion may take place, by the union of different kinds, it is immediately stopped by the incapacity of the individuals, so produced, to perpetuate that confusion. The bodies of all are wonderfully formed, and each affords an affecting display of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. The minute inhabitant of the brook, and the insect that flutters in the gale, proclaim his divine per-

fections, no less than the towering elephant, or the huge monster of the deep.

40, 41. Every part of the universe is furnished with its appropriate inhabitants. "There are also bodies celestial (*σώματα πνευματικά*), and bodies terrestrial (*σώματα πτωχικά*)."¹ The heavenly bodies are hung in the vast expanse, and the surface of the earth is richly diversified with mountains, rivers, woods, and seas. And as nothing is created in vain, it is reasonable to suppose that the planets and other celestial luminaries are the habitations of various orders of intelligent beings. These various objects have a glory peculiar to themselves; and, in different degrees, declare the divine perfections, (Ps. xix. 1.) "The glory of the celestial (bodies) is one (*ἑστία*) and the glory of the terrestrial is another. Among the heavenly bodies, the sun appears most conspicuous, by the greatness of his orb, and the splendour of his beams, affording light, heat, and vigour to the earth and other planets. The light of the sun is reflected, in a more soft and chastened manner, by the moon, "pale empress of the night," while a more faint and distant light is emitted from the innumerable stars that garnish the face the sky. In short, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." Even among the stars a diversity of brightness is observable, according to their distances or magnitude; some shine by their own light, others by a borrowed lustre; some appear of a pale white, others of a deep yellow, others of a red colour; "for star differeth (*διαφέρει*, excelleth) from star in glory."

It is not therefore wonderful if the human body should be capable of a similar diversity in its appearance, when restored from the dust. 42—44. "So also is the resurrection of the dead: It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural, or animal, body (*ψυχικόν*), it is raised a spiritual body (*πνευματικόν*): there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." According to some, the word *σπνγεται*, it is sown, refers to the burial of the body in the grave, as compared to the sowing of grain; but it seems to include also the present condition of the body, as sprung from frail and sinful parents, as well as its state of dissolution in the tomb. It is produced a frail and perishing substance, with the seeds of mortality within itself, and at last dissolves in corruption, and becomes the prey of worms;

but when *raised* in its glorified state, it shall be no more subject to change, decay, disease, or death. It is produced in a *dishonourable condition*, suffering the effects of the fall, and despoiled of its original dignity, and must submit to the stroke of death, as a condemned criminal. It shall be *raised* in a *glorious form*, resembling the body of the heavenly Saviour on the holy mount, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. In its present state, it is liable to a thousand pains and infirmities, which unfit it for the service of God, and disturb the soul in its spiritual exercises, till it gradually sinks, under its own *weakness* (*ασθενεια*), and is laid in its lowly bed: but it shall be *raised* in a *vigorous* and active condition (*υδυναμι*), as a suitable companion to the glorified spirit, capable of sustaining the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, and fitted to serve God, without weariness, day and night in his temple. The *brightness* of the heavenly Majesty shall no longer overpower its faculties or dazzle its sight. In fine, it is now a mere *animal body*, formed out of the dust, which requires to be sustained with food, refreshed with sleep, and braced with exercise, which has many appetites and instincts common to it with the inferior creatures; but then it shall no more require to be gratified with the objects of sense, or sustained with the meat that perisheth. It shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. It shall be purified from all the grosser ingredients which are inseparable from its present condition; and though it must ever be essentially distinct from the soul, it shall be so moulded and refined that it may be considered rather as a *spiritual*, than a material or *earthly body*. There is an obvious *difference between these*; but what is the precise distinction, it is impossible now to determine. Thus we are taught that the happiness of heaven is of a very different nature from the sensual delights of a Mohammedan paradise. The indulgence of the animal appetites forms the chief attraction of the *latter*: In the *former* they are entirely done away, and are succeeded by pleasures that are pure, spiritual, and sublime. In the descriptions that are given in Scripture of the glory of the heavenly state, the conceptions are at once chaste and magnificent. There is no room for the indulgence of a wanton imagination. Every idea is removed that would excite unholy desires, and every circumstance is so arranged, as to impress the mind with the unspotted purity of Him who dwells in that high and

holy place. In this way, the religion of Christ is distinguished not only from the Arabian imposture, but from all false systems whatever; and so true it is, that none but the pure in heart shall see God. The *change* which shall take place on the resurrection body, obviates the objection of those, who consider the body as the prison of the soul; for according to the view here given, instead of being a *hindrance* to the spirit, it will increase its sphere of enjoyment.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us never forget the injurious effects of evil communications. If we wish to preserve a pure conscience, and a peaceful mind, let us avoid the society of the wicked. Let us beware of their specious cavils against the truth. Let us cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, and let us choose our companions from those who fear God and keep his way.

2. Let us often contemplate the wonders of creation, which are admirably fitted to enlarge our conceptions of the infinite wisdom and power of God. When we survey the immensity of his empire, and the infinite variety of his works, we shall not be disposed to limit Omnipotence, or think it incredible that God should raise the dead. (*See on this subject an excellent treatise by Mr Dick of Perth, entitled the Christian Philosopher.*) Let us not be solicitous for the continuance of the life that now is. Let us not sink under the pains and infirmities of the body. Soon will the conflict be over, and the victory secured. Our present *corruption, dishonour, and weakness*, shall be exchanged for *immortality, glory, and power*. May we rest and stand in our lot at the end of the days! (Dan. xii. 13.)

SECTION FIFTH.—VERSES 45—58.

CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT.

THE Apostle had spoken of the *change* that is to be effected on the bodies of the saints, which shall be raised in a glorified

state, free from corruption, dishonour, and weakness, and clothed with incorruption, glory and power. They shall no longer possess the infirmities and appetites of mere *animal existence*, but shall exhibit the beauty and vigour of *spiritual life*. He now *contrasts* the body which we derive from the first Adam, with that which the saints shall receive, by their connection with his great antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ. But *first*, he describes the different constitution of their persons. Referring to Gen. ii. 7. he observes, ver. 45. "Thus also it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul (ὡς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν); the last Adam, a quickening or life-giving Spirit (ὡς πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν)." In the passage referred to, we are told, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a *living soul*," לֵּבָשׁ חַיָּה; the last clause is rendered by the LXX, nearly in the words used by the Apostle, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἀνθρώπος ὡς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν. The same sentiment is expressed, Job xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of the Lord hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Adam was thus possessed of an *immortal soul*, united to a *material body* formed out of the dust, and sustained by the fruits of the ground, adapted to the condition in which he was placed in this world, and deriving many of his pleasures, as well as much of his knowledge, through the medium of the senses. This *natural* or *animal life* is communicated to all his posterity who are formed and upheld by the power of Him "in whom we live and move and have our being." Very different is the constitution of the person of *Christ*. He is called the last or second Adam, as being the Head and representative of all his spiritual offspring—the restorer, and the first-born, of the heavenly family: "He is a life-giving Spirit." So he says of himself: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" (John v. 21, 26.) He raises the souls of believers from the death of sin, to a life of righteousness—sets them free from condemnation—maintains, by his Spirit, the principle of a new life in their souls, and shall at last raise their bodies from the dust of the grave, to inherit eternal blessedness, (John xi. 25, 26.) The first Adam was endued with natural life, but he could not communicate either spiritual or eternal life to others. The second Adam

is the resurrection and the life. Having died for sin once, death has no more dominion over him. He now lives for ever more, and has the keys of hell and death, (Rev. i. 18.) The English version supplies the words, *was made*, which are not in the original; yet the sense of them seems to be implied in the connecting particle, *ut*. The truth is, the Apostle is not speaking of our Lord's *essential deity*, but of his mediatorial glory, as in John i. 14, "And the Word *was made* (*γενεσθαι*, became) flesh, and dwelt among us."

But there is a regular *order* observed in all the works of God, according to which, things gradually arrive at perfection. 46. "But not that which was spiritual was first, but that which is natural (*ψυχικόν*), afterwards that which is spiritual." The *natural* or *animal* life was communicated first, as being the less perfect and less honourable condition. From this, believers are gradually advanced to their high destiny, as heirs of eternal life. From *Adam*, they, in common with other men, derive their natural existence, and even this is reduced by sin to a frail and perishing state. But they are born again by the Holy Spirit; they are gradually transformed into the divine likeness, and they shall finally attain to the consummation of bliss, when their bodies are raised spiritual and immortal at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in the natural world, every thing advances by slow degrees towards perfection. At the creation, the earth was first formed, then the trees and herbs, afterwards the various tribes of animals, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the earth; last of all, when the habitation was prepared and furnished, *man* was created, the most noble and excellent of the creatures, for whose use the inferior animals were made. So the solar light gradually advances from the faint glimmering of dawn to the full blaze of meridian day; the fruits of the earth produce small seeds, from which evolves the future plant; man and other creatures, by slow degrees arrive at maturity; and, in the same manner, the christian advances from the state of a *babe* in Christ to the full stature of the sons of God. On this subject, Bishop Butler observes: "Men are impatient and for precipitating things; but the Author of nature appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing his natural ends by slow successive steps. And there is a plan of things beforehand laid out, which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means,

as well as length of time, in order to the carrying of its several parts into execution," (*Analogy*, part 2. c. 4. p. 241.)

The *first Adam* had his origin from the *dust*; so that notwithstanding the symmetry and beauty of his outward form, he still inhabited a house of clay; he was doomed by the fall to return to the dust, whence he had been taken, and the views and desires of his posterity are in a great measure bounded by *this world*. 47. "The first man is from the earth, of *dust* (*ἐκ γῆς, χοϊκός*); the second man is the Lord from heaven:" Though He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, he descended from above, forsook his throne of glory, and veiled his divine majesty in a human body. Still, however, he was, as his name Emmanuel imports, *God in our nature*: when he *left* this world, he *ascended* up where he was *before*; and he shall again descend from heaven to complete the salvation of his redeemed people. How clearly is the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ asserted in this passage! So he told his disciples, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father," (John xvi. 28.) Dr Macknight supposes that this last clause is elliptical, and thus renders it: "The second man, the Lord from heaven, is heavenly." This indeed completes the contrast, and agrees with what is said in the next verse; still the abruptness of the present form is very emphatic. The same critic is of opinion, that, in the 48th verse, the Apostle describes the specific difference between the resurrection bodies of the *righteous* and the *wicked*; the one shall be raised earthly as before, the other *heavenly*; he accordingly gives the expression a *future* sense, "as the earthly, such also the earthly, *shall be*," &c.; but this interpretation disturbs the continuity of the argument, and introduces a speculation more curious than useful. It is not to be supposed, that the bodies of the wicked shall have the same qualities, when raised from the grave, with those of the righteous; but on this subject scripture is silent. It seems rather the design of the sacred writer to contrast the nature we inherit from our first parent, with that which Christians shall derive from the heavenly Adam: "As is the earthly (*χοϊκός*) such are they also who are earthly; and as is the heavenly, such are they also who are heavenly." The nature we derive from the *earthly Adam* must necessarily resemble his own: Accordingly, it is said of Seth, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness," (Gen. v. 3.): Thus

the stream resembles the fountain from which it flows, and the fruit partakes of the nature of the tree. So of man, "for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job xiv. 4. Man, though at first made *upright*, fell from his primitive innocence, and became a sinful, weak, and mortal creature : *Such* must ever be the condition of his natural offspring. On the other hand, believers are made to resemble the *heavenly Saviour*, not only in his moral perfections, but in the glory of his exaltation. They are transformed into his likeness here, so as to exhibit the chief lineaments of his character; and even their bodies shall be fashioned like to his glorious body; they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is; when they awake, they shall be satisfied with his likeness; they shall sit down with him on his throne, and shall participate in his glory and blessedness, (John xvii. 24.) This is more fully expressed in the 49th verse, "And as we have born the image of the earthly one (*χοινων*), we shall also bear the image (*μορφή*) of the heavenly." All mankind bear the likeness of the *earthly Adam*, in as much as they are fallen, depraved, wretched, and dying creatures. This of course is the natural condition of the *saints themselves*; but they are made to resemble the *heavenly Adam*, not only by the imputation of his righteousness, and the sanctification of his Spirit, but especially, what is here intended, by the transcendent glory to which they shall be raised at the last day.

It might be thought to militate against the doctrine of the superior happiness of the righteous over the rest of mankind, that they are not exempted from the pains and the dishonour of death; and some christians might be inclined to wish that they were at once translated to heaven, without tasting that bitter cup. But the Apostle here shews that such a dissolution is necessary, in order to fit the believer for the heavenly inheritance. 50. "Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption." It would be quite unsuitable to carry the body, as presently constituted, to the regions of immortality, with all its wants, infirmities, and corruptible tendencies. It could not endure the brightness of the Divine Majesty. It could not sustain the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. It would be incapable of entering, with proper relish, into the pure pleasures and uninterrupted services of that exalted state. Jehovah declared to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and

live," (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) When Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" (Isa. vi. 5.) and when the beloved Apostle saw his risen Saviour clothed in the garments of light, he "fell at his feet as dead," (Rev. i. 17.) The body in its *present state*, would be a clog and hindrance to the happy spirit; and therefore it must be laid aside, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. It must undergo a *change* to fit it for its new sphere of existence. The essence of happiness consists in the adaptation of our faculties to *suitable objects*; where the faculty is lost or enfeebled, so much satisfaction is destroyed. Such a change, therefore, as is effected by death, is so far from being inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, that it is a striking evidence of both. Corruption and mortality must be removed, before immortal life can be enjoyed. The decayed and dishonourable covering must be thrown off, before the celestial adorning can be put on; as the insect must emerge from its chrysalis state, before it can display all the beautiful colours and new activity of its more perfect condition. This consideration is intended, not only to reconcile us to the thoughts of death; but to remove the philosophical objection, that the revival of the body would rather diminish than increase the felicity of the soul.

51, 52. Some might be led to conclude from this, that the whole human race must necessarily be consigned to the grave, which would suppose the earth to be utterly desolate at the coming of Christ, contrary to other passages of Scripture. In answer, the Apostle observes, as a *secret* that had been revealed to him, that the whole company of the saints shall not indeed be subjected to the stroke of death, but those who remain on earth must undergo a *change* equivalent to that which shall pass on those who are raised from the grave. Thus they shall be placed on an equality with those who have fallen asleep, and shall be fitted for the heavenly world. "Behold, I tell (*λεγω*) you a mystery; we shall not indeed all sleep, (*κοιμηθησόμεθα*) but we shall all be changed, (*αλλαγησόμεθα*)." The change here spoken of will probably resemble that which took place on Enoch and Elijah, who were *translated* that they should not see death. It will be of a similar nature with that which passed on our Saviour himself, when he rose from the tomb. It is probable that such a change would have

been undergone by our first parents, after the period of probation had elapsed in the state of innocence. The Apostle, by a common figure of speech, represents himself as one of those who shall be *alive* at the coming of our Lord : and indeed the whole body of the redeemed forms but one family ; but, from other parts of his writings, it is evident that he was far from considering the day of judgment as *at hand*. This appears from what he himself says in writing to the Thessalonians, (2 Epis. ii. 1—3.) and it is universally allowed that *that* Epistle was written *earlier* than those to the Corinthians. He elsewhere speaks of his being *raised up*, (2 Cor. iv. 14.) The transformation here spoken of will be effected by the instantaneous exertion of Almighty power,—“ *in a moment*, (an atom of time, *ἰν ᾠτομα*), in the twinkling of an eye, (the most rapid of all movements,) at the last trumpet, (*ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σαλπιγγί,*) for it shall sound (*σαλπισεὶ γὰρ*), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Our translators use the word *trump*, as more emphatical than *trumpet*, which seems *at first* to have been considered a the diminutive of the former. This awful and sublime sound, will penetrate the deepest recesses of the tomb, and the dark caverns of the deep. It will awake to life the countless generations of the dead. But O how different will be its effects on the righteous and on the wicked ! Referring to the same event, our Saviour says : “ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,” (Matt. xxiv. 31.) The description of the last judgment in 1 Thess. iv. 16. is nearly similar ; “ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” In all ages the trumpet has been blown on occasions of solemnity : to announce the approach of a sovereign prince, or as the signal of battle to contending armies. Here it will summon the nations before their Omnipotent Judge. When God descended on Mount Sinai to *promulgate* the law, the voice of a trumpet was heard exceeding loud, which made all the people that were in the camp to tremble ; and what shall be the consternation of the wicked, when the loud blast of the last trumpet shall proclaim the advent of the Saviour to take vengeance on them who obey not his Gospel ! Then that eventful hour shall come, “ when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of

the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John v. 28, 29.) Then the bodies of the departed saints shall be raised in glorious lustre and immortal vigour, and those that *remain shall be changed*. This is agreeable to what is said, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or anticipate) them that are asleep." Every mark of weakness and imperfection shall be removed. 53. "For this corruptible body (*φθαρτον*) must put on incorruption, (*ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν*), and this mortal must put on immortality. So in the 2d Epistle chap. v. 2. he says, "for in this tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon (*ἐνδύσασθαι*) with our house that is from heaven." When this blessed change shall be effected, the last enemy shall be compelled to yield his prey, and shall be so completely *annihilated* that no trace of his power shall remain. 54. "Now when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying (*λογος*) that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory, (*ὡς νικας*)'." This is a quotation from Isaiah xxv. 8 where the happiness of the saints in the heavenly world is described. (Compare Rev. vii. 17.) Some render the expression (*ὡς νικας*) for *ever*, as the Hebrew phrase לְנֶצַח frequently signifies, but the sense is nearly the same. We cannot conceive a more emphatic way of expressing *utter destruction* than to represent an enemy as *swallowed up*. In anticipation of this glorious scene, the Apostle breaks out into the language of holy triumph and exultation. By a bold figure, he *personifies* death and the grave, as two cruel and insatiable tyrants, who had long exercised an uncontrouled dominion over the human race, the one armed with a formidable sting or dart, and the other boasting of his victory over his puny adversaries. And he demands of them what was now become of those terrible ensigns of their power? They had been *wrested from them* by an irresistible arm; the captives were released, and they themselves were rendered feeble and harmless. 55. "Where, O death, is thy sting (*κέντρον*)? where, O grave, is thy victory?" The Apostle seems here to allude to Hosea xiii. 14. "O death! I will be thy plagues: O grave! I will be thy destruction." These words are translated by the LXX, nearly in the same terms as those used

by the Apostle, only the victory or judgment, is ascribed to death, and the sting to the grave, (*που η δίκη σου θανει; που το κειρος σου αδη;*) The word *αδης*, seems very properly to be rendered *grave*, in this passage, though, in other places, it signifies the unseen world, or the abode of departed spirits. The Apostle proceeds to shew in what manner these potent enemies had been disarmed. 56, 57. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength (*δυναμις*) of sin is the law:" For what is it that makes death so much an object of terror? Is it not a consciousness of guilt, and the fear of condemnation? and what produces this apprehension of wrath, but a knowledge of the holy and spiritual law of God, pointing out the malignity of sin, and dooming every transgressor to the curse? "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Divine justice has been satisfied by the atonement of the Saviour—the law is magnified by his obedience—and *now* the weakest christian, relying on *His* obedience, and fighting under the banners of the cross, can go forth to meet this terrible foe, with composure, cheerfulness, and joy. He can view all the appalling circumstances of dissolution without dismay, and, upheld by an invisible arm, he obtains a glorious victory over death and the grave. *This* then may be considered as the song of the dying christian, or as the anthem of praise sung by the whole of the redeemed family, when ransomed from the power of the grave by their victorious leader. In *either view*, the language is animated and sublime. Thus did the children of Israel celebrate their victory over the host of Pharoah, on the shores of the Red Sea. Milton has amplified the idea in the text, in his celebrated description of death:

"The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either: black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

PAR. LOST, b. 2. v. 666.

The Apostle concludes this sublime discourse with a practical

exhortation to perseverance and diligence, in hope of the glorious reward. 58. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast (*ἰσχυροί*,) unmoveable (*ἀκίνητοι*), abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." Having such a blessed prospect before them, it surely behoved them to be grounded and settled in the faith of the Gospel, especially in the belief of the important doctrine of which he had been treating. They must not allow themselves to be moved away from the hope of eternal life; they must be no longer children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but remain unshaken amidst the temptations of the world, and the assaults of error, like the firm rock in the midst of the ocean. They ought to be ready to every good work, diligently improving their talents, and making constant advances in usefulness, in holiness and love; and God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love. A cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of Christ, shall in no wise pass unrewarded. (Matt. x. 42.) The words *ἐν Κρίσει*, are properly connected with *κοπος*; the labour here meant is that which is performed from love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the fruit of faith in him. A similar improvement is made of the doctrine of the resurrection, in Phil. iv. 1. "Therefore, my brethren beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the faith, O beloved." Indeed we cannot imagine a more powerful motive to active exertion in the service of Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Do we bear the image of the earthly Adam? Are we sinful, depraved, and dying creatures? How should this reflection subdue our pride, and fill us with self-abasement! We carry about with us the proofs of our degradation; every pain we feel reminds us of our mortality, and soon death will change our countenance, and send us away. Let us then adore the goodness of God, that he has been pleased to reveal a way by which our lost dignity and happiness shall be restored. May he who is a quickening spirit, raise our souls to spiritual life; may he transform us into his moral image, and finally render us victorious over death and the grave!

2. Why should we fear the stroke of death? He is a conquered

enemy. To them that believe in Jesus he is deprived of his sting, The grave itself shall be forced to disgorge his prey ; while the ransomed throng, clothed in the garments of immortality, shall celebrate the praises of him through whom they have obtained the victory. Let this blessed hope revive our drooping spirits—fortify our souls against every temptation, and animate us to increasing activity in the work of the Lord. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall : For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” (2 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

“Array’d in glorious grace
 Shall these vile bodies shine ;
 And ev’ry shape, and ev’ry face
 Look heav’nly and divine.
 These lively hopes we owe
 To Jesus’ dying love ;
 We would adore his grace below,
 And sing his pow’r above.”—WATTS.

On the subject of this lecture, I would take the liberty to recommend Mr Russell’s Work on the Adamic and Mediatorial dispensations, part. II. sect. 12, 13.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—12.

CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS.

IN the preceding chapters, the Apostle had adverted to several points, as to which the church at Corinth had required *information*, or stood in need of *reproof*. Before drawing the Epistle to a close, he proceeds to notice several subjects of inferior moment, or of a more private nature. He first refers to the *public collection* intended to be made on behalf of the poor saints in Jerusalem. To this subject he again alludes in his second Epistle, chapters 8th and 9th. It is distinctly referred to, Rom. xv. 26. “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem.” See also Acts xxiv. 17. This supply was rendered necessary, partly by the severe persecution which long raged in Judea, and partly by a famine which overspread the land, (Acts xi. 29.) It was designed, by the Gentile brethren, as a token of their gratitude for having received the Gospel by means of the *Jews*. From what is stated in the passage above quoted, (Rom. xv. 26.) as well as from the language of the Apostle, (2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.) it appears that the churches in Macedonia had made great exertions on this occasion. It would also appear, from the first verse of *this chapter*, that it had been recommended to the churches in Galatia: Indeed this is intimated by what is recorded, Gal. ii. 10. These circumstances shew the lively interest which all the disciples of Christ, in the apostolic age, took in each other’s welfare, and the brotherly affection which subsisted among them. The contribution was dictated by kindness, and was received by the Apostle and his countrymen, as “fruit abounding to the account” of the benefactors. Thus it was widely different from any legal assess-

ment for the support of the poor, which has been resorted to, in modern times, to *supply the want of brotherly love*. The Apostle does not think it beneath his dignity to give directions on this subject. The Corinthians were well *able* to assist their brethren, and he does not doubt of their *readiness* to do so. It was not therefore necessary that he should enforce the *general duty* of beneficence, but merely suggest the best method of performing it, on the present occasion; and the plan which he recommends, is to make a *weekly contribution* for that special purpose, on the day in which they usually assembled for divine worship: This method he had already prescribed to the churches of Galatia.

1, 2. "Now, concerning the collection (*λογισ*, gathering) for the saints, as I have given commandment (*δυναμις*), to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. On the first day of the week (*κατα μὴν τοῦ κυρίου*), let each of you lay by himself, (*κατ' ἑαυτὸν τίθετω*), *treasuring up* as (God) hath prospered him (*θεομαρτυροῦντι ὅτι ἐνδοθῆται*), that there may be no collections (*λογισ*) when I come." It is observed by Dr M^cKnight, that the common translation of *τίθετω κατ' ἑαυτὸν θησαυρίζων*, "let every one lay by him in store," is inconsistent with the last part of the verse, "that there be no gatherings when I come;" for, according to that translation, the collections would still have been made at the Apostle's coming. He accordingly renders it, "*let each of you lay somewhat by itself, putting it into the treasury;*" and it must be allowed that this version is more consistent with the following clause, and puts no violence on the original words. This view is confirmed by the circumstance of a *particular day* being specified, namely, that on which they met for public worship. If only a *private* appropriation of a certain sum had been intended, any other day of the week might have answered as well. According to the common version, the disciples are recommended to *lay by* a certain proportion of their gains on the first day of the week, allowing the sum to accumulate till the Apostle's arrival, when the contributions might be put into the treasury of the church, and delivered to him without further delay. But on the *other* hypothesis, they are commanded to place a weekly sum *into the public treasury*, on the Lord's day, to be kept *by itself* against the Apostle's arrival. This would prevent the necessity of any further contributions. Thus a sum would be in readiness, which could at once be transmitted to Ju-

day, and would be much greater than if contributed at *one time*. It has been observed that the words, *κατὰ μίαν εὐχέλαιον*, properly signify, "on the first day of *every* week." From this it is evident that the primitive christians regularly met *on that day* for public worship. On no other principle can we account for this particular day being specified. This is confirmed by other passages of Scripture. Thus in Acts xx. 7. the disciples at Troas are said to have met together, on the first day of the week, to break bread; as if it were their constant practice. In Rev. i. 10. we find it distinguished by an appropriate name (*κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*) *the Lord's day*, or the day set apart to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: He himself put particular honour on that day, not only by then rising from the dead, but by appearing to his disciples once and again on the first day of the week, when they were assembled together. The appointment of *that day* as a holy solemnity, seems to be intimated in Ps. cxviii. 24. where the resurrection of Christ is predicted: "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The testimony of ancient authors confirms the same fact. Thus Justin Martyr says, *Τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ, πάντες κατὰ πολλοὺς ἀρχαίους πατέρας οὗτοι τοῦτο συνέλθεσθαι γινώσκται*; On the day called Sunday, there is an assembly of all (christians), whether living in the city or in the country." On account of the celebration of the Eucharist, it was also called *Dies panis*, "the day of bread." (See *Owen's Preliminary Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 2 p. 484.) The appropriation of a seventh part of our time to religious worship, is a part of the moral law, and the mere change of the day makes no difference as to the obligation of the duty. The permanence of this law seems to be intimated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iv. 9. "There remaineth therefore a *Sabbatism* (*εὐχέλαισμος*) for the people of God." On the whole, this is a most merciful institution, intimately connected with the well-being of society. And it appears to be a rash concession of Dr Paley and others, that the obligation to rest from labour is restricted by the divine law, merely to the hours appropriated to public worship.* If the sanctification of the *whole day* be regard-

* See Moral Philosophy, c. 7. The opinions of Dr Paley are combated with great success by Dr Dwight, Sermon 107.

ed only as a *human institution*, a fearful inroad is made on the purity of public morals.

It would also appear that on this day the disciples of Christ were accustomed to *contribute* for pious purposes, namely, for the support of their own poor, Acts vi. 1. for the maintenance of their pastors, Gal. vi. 6. Philip. iv. 15. for defraying the expenses of public worship, to afford assistance to other churches, and for the propagation of the Gospel. This was the practice of the churches in Galatia, as well as in Achaia. The *measure* of giving was left to every one's conscience, but their contributions were to bear some proportion to their gains, "as God had prospered them." The expression *ὅ, τι αὐτῷ δοῦναι*, is rendered by the Vulgate, "*quod ei bene placuerit*, 'what it shall well please him;' but the other translation seems more agreeable to the original, and recognizes our dependance on divine Providence for every temporal blessing. Of course these contributions rose or fell, according to the circumstances of the members. This is the most equitable and honourable rule. There is great wisdom in appointing such stated contributions. It promotes industry, and cherishes habits of calculation and economy. It raises the character of the contributors in their own estimation—gives them an interest in all that is going on—promotes brotherly love, and accommodates itself to the condition of all. A small sum thus regularly saved, is scarcely felt as a burden. On this principle, *penny a-week societies* have been lately instituted with great success, both for religious and charitable purposes; and the aggregate of these small sums increases the general fund to an astonishing degree. The word *θησαυρίζων*, may perhaps intimate that money thus appropriated is not lost, but is *treasured up* against the final day of retribution. So Eccles. xi. 1. "Cast thy bread-corn upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days."

When the Apostle wrote this letter, he intended shortly to visit Corinth, not only to afford the church *there* the benefit of his instructions, but to obtain assistance for his poor countrymen. When their contributions were made up, he advised them to appoint some brethren of approved fidelity, as the bearers of their gift, with letters of recommendation to the brethren in Judea; the persons thus authorized, he would cordially *concur* in sending on this errand. 3. "And when I come, whomsoever ye may approve by letters (*ἀκριβοῦς δι' ἐπιστολῶν*), them will I send to carry your

gift (*ἀποστολὴν τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν*) to Jerusalem." There is some ambiguity in this verse, as to the meaning of the expression, "whom ye may approve by letters." Some think that *the church* members were required to signify their approbation of the persons thus chosen, by a *written testimonial* to be delivered to the Apostle; but it has been objected, that such a commendation would have been superfluous, if Paul, as is here intimated, were himself on the spot: they therefore suppose that the *letters* here referred to, were to be addressed, not to the Apostle, but to the church in Jerusalem; this is the opinion of M^r Knight, who renders the word *δοκιμασῆτε*, *ye may authorize*; perhaps the expression *δι' ἐπιστολῶν*, may be connected with the following clause, and then it will signify that Paul himself would give them a written testimonial to the brethren in Judea: "them I will send with letters." But it is not improbable that *both the Apostle, and the church* at Corinth might furnish written certificates. If, however, it were thought proper that he should be *himself* the bearer of their gift, he would take those brethren *along with him*, in order that they might satisfy themselves as to the faithful application of the money. 4. "But if it be fit (*ἐάν*) that I should go also, they shall go with me." This shews the strict honour and integrity of the Apostle. He wished that all his transactions, especially of a pecuniary nature, should be open to the inspection of others. It proves likewise, his attention to the temporal welfare of his fellow christians: He was not an enthusiast who overlooks the substantial duties of benevolence. It evinces his *unwearied diligence*: He did not plead the multiplicity of his ministerial duties, as an excuse for not interfering with secular affairs. It establishes the authenticity of these epistles, that such casual hints should so well coincide with facts related in other parts of the New Testament. On this point, Dr Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* may be consulted with great advantage, (See 1st Ep. to the Corinthians, No. 10.)

From verse 8th, it appears that the Apostle was now at Ephesus, and was meditating a journey into Macedonia. On his return he proposed to visit Corinth, which lay nearly in his route from that country to Asia Minor; and in that case he was hopeful that he might be permitted to remain with them during the winter season; and he confided in their kindness towards him, that they would supply him with every thing necessary for the prosecution of his journey, wherever his next station might be.

5, 6. "Now I will come to you, when I have passed (διελθὼν) through Macedonia (for I do pass through Macedonia) and perhaps (τυχόν) I shall abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may send me forward (προπομπήν) whithersoever I may go." (See Acts xix. 21.) The verb διελθὼν is rendered in our English version, "when I shall pass through;" but it is evident, from verse 7, that he did not intend to visit the church at Corinth *till after his return*: the verb is, besides, in the past tense, and is properly translated by Doddridge and McKnight, "when I have passed through." The words, "for I do pass through Macedonia," are rendered by the former critic, 'I am just on my journey through Macedonia.' They must however be considered as merely intimating his *intention*; for it seems from the 8th verse, that he did not mean to commence his journey *until Pentecost*. Thus the life of Paul was one of continual exertion and travel. But he anticipated great pleasure, in visiting the churches which he had planted. This is evident from the manner in which he expresses his intention of prolonging his stay at Corinth *during winter*. Though he had had occasion to reprove many things in the conduct of the Corinthians, he did not decline affording them the benefit of his personal ministry; and he was at the same time so well assured of their *good will*, that he cheerfully placed himself under their protection, and trusted to their *helping him forward* on his way, in a friendly and hospitable manner. Such sentiments reflect honour on both parties. He might indeed have paid them an earlier visit *in passing*, but he preferred putting it off till his return, when he could afford to spend *some time* with them, and in making this resolution, he expresses his humble dependance on divine Providence. 7. "For I will not (I do not wish, οὐ θέλω) to see you now by the way (ἐν παροδῷ), but I hope to remain some time (χρόνον τινα) with you, if the Lord permit," (εἰαν ὁ Κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ). One reason of his deferring his visit might be to afford time for ascertaining the effect of his first letter; but the reason *assigned* is, that he could not be satisfied with a *passing call*, as we say; and he was eager to visit the churches in Macedonia, which stood in need of his presence and direction. From various passages of the apostolic writings, we find that it was the constant practice of these excellent men to recognize the doctrine of a *particular Providence*. Thus this same Apostle, in taking leave of the church at Ephesus, (Acts xviii.

21.) says, "I will return again to you, if God will;" and in writing to the Philippians (chap. ii. 19.) he observes, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you." The Apostle James reproves those who neglected this proper acknowledgement of their dependence on God, (chap. iv. 13. 15.) This shows the habitual impression they had of this consolatory truth, that all events are under the direction, and at the disposal, of Infinite Wisdom; and that the care of the Almighty extends to the most minute concerns of men. How does their example reprove the self-confident and thoughtless manner in which many professing christians express themselves! and how inconsistent is it, in any who acknowledge the divine authority of the Scriptures; to treat the doctrine of a *particular Providence* with contempt or ridicule! Such persons judge of the Almighty by themselves. The multiplicity of events occasions no perplexity to his infinite mind:

At present the Apostle was engaged in a sphere of too great importance, to allow of any other object to withdraw his attention from it. 8. "But I will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost." In the mean time, amidst much opposition, there were, at Ephesus, encouraging prospects of success. 9. "For a great and effectual door (*θυρα*) has been opened to me, and there are many opposites (*αντιπαριστα*)." The word *door* is used in Scripture for a favourable opportunity of exertion, (Hos. ii. 15. Col. iv. 3.) Rev. iii. 8.) Some are of opinion that there is here an allusion to the opening of the barriers in the race course, and the starting of many competitors. From the history of the Acts it appears that many of the inhabitants of Ephesus were converted to the faith, and among these a number of persons who had practised the art of sorcery, (Acts xix. 19.) a flourishing church was soon after formed, to which he writes in terms of high commendation; but, as usual, he met with much opposition, (Acts xix. 9.) "diverse were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude:" this opposition at last broke out into an open tumult by the instigation of Demetrius and the craftsmen, (verses 23—40.) This seems to have disconcerted his plan, and obliged him to leave Ephesus at an earlier period than he now intended. "After the uproar was ceased, he took leave of the disciples, and departed for Macedonia," (Acts xx. 1.) From the views before us, we perceive the ardour of the Apostle's mind.

The appearance of opposition only quickened his zeal ; on the other hand, he ascribed his *success* to the grace of God, who had opened to him a door of utterance.

As he could not visit the Church at Corinth, *in person*, at this time, on account of his numerous engagements, he had sent his beloved son Timothy to supply his place. From Acts xix. 22. it appears that Timothy was with the Apostle at Ephesus, and that he and Erastus had been sent into Macedonia. On this occasion, it is probable, Paul gave him directions to visit Corinth. He accordingly mentions his having sent Timothy in a former part of this Epistle, (chap. iv. 17.) In the *postscript*, this Evangelist is mentioned as one of the bearers of the letter, but this seems inconsistent with the mode of expression (*εἰ ἔλθῃ*) *if he come* ; he was evidently on his journey *before* the epistle was written. From Paul's letters to Timothy, as well as from other parts of the New Testament, we learn that his associate was but a young man. He appears also to have been naturally of a diffident spirit. The Corinthian church, on the other hand, was divided into factions, and the members were greatly elated on account of their knowledge and spiritual gifts. On these accounts, they might be disposed to look down upon this young preacher, (as they did on Paul himself,) which would excite *uneasiness* in his mind ; this would be very injurious to their own edification, and would materially hinder his usefulness. It was also a state of feeling very opposite to that which should subsist between a christian church and their pastor. The Apostle therefore desired them to act towards him in such an affectionate and respectful manner, as would set his mind *at rest*, and encourage his hands in the work of God. 10. "Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear (*αφοβως*)."
To enforce his exhortation, he reminds them, that however inferior to the Apostle, or even to their own teachers, they might consider him, in respect of *age* or other endowments, he was engaged in the same service with himself, preached the same doctrine, and was entitled to the same regard : "For he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." It is painful to think that a christian minister is often not *without fear* in the midst of his own people : By their coldness and neglect, their injurious suspicions of his conduct, and endless cavils at his doctrine, they fill his mind with the most painful apprehensions. They forget that their own respectability, as well as the

usefulness of their pastor, greatly depend on the exercise of esteem and confidence towards him. It is not so much to his *person*, as to the *office* he holds, that such deference is due. The honourable treatment of christian teachers, is often referred to with approbation, (Phil. ii. 28. 2 Cor. vii. 15.)

The Apostle therefore exhorted the Corinthians to give Timothy a cordial and respectful reception, and to send *him back* in peace and safety, after he had accomplished the object of his visit; for Paul expected him with certain other brethren whose names are not mentioned. 11. "Let no one therefore despise him (*ἐξουθενήσῃ*, *set him at naught*); but send him forward in peace, that he may come to me, for I wait for (*ἀνδεχόμεναι*) him with the brethren." It is generally thought that the Apostle alludes to Erastus, who accompanied Timothy, to Titus the bearer of this letter, and to the brother mentioned, 2 Epis. viii. 19.

It is probable that the Corinthians, in their letter, had requested a visit from *Apollos*, who was held in great estimation among them, (chap. iii. 4.), and had laboured some time at Corinth on a former occasion (Acts xviii. 27.); but he could not be persuaded to comply with their invitation at *present*, though urged by the Apostle himself, who had no feeling of jealousy towards him. 12. "But respecting brother Apollos, I exhorted him greatly (*πολλὰ*, in many words) to come to you with the brethren; but his inclination (*θέλημα*) was not at all (*παρρη*) to come now; but he will come when he shall find a convenient time (*καιρὸν*)." It is thought that Apollos might be now engaged at some other station, which he considered of more importance; or he might be displeased with the disorderly conduct of the Corinthians, and choose to keep at a distance, till they were brought to a better temper of mind; especially if he thought they wished to make him the head of a party. This shews the cordiality which subsisted among the primitive teachers of Christianity. They had no desire to *follow separate interests*, or to avail themselves of party differences. It also shews the *freedom* with which they exercised their ministry, choosing such stations as they thought proper, without being at all subject to any human authority. If even an inspired apostle would not presume to *dictate* to his fellow-labourer, much less does it become any ecclesiastical court *now* to appoint a minister to a station *contrary to his own inclination and judgment*.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Has God prospered us in our temporal affairs? Let us consider ourselves as only stewards of what we possess : Let us be rich in good works, willing to communicate, ready to distribute. Thus we shall lay up a good foundation against the time to come, (1 Tim. vi. 17—19.) How many objects of christian liberality are now presented to our attention ! What reason have we to rejoice that God has inclined the hearts of his people generally, to lay by a portion of their abundance to promote the temporal and spiritual welfare of their fellow men !—And how ought we to rejoice that so many great and effectual doors have been opened, in different parts of the world, for the introduction of the Gospel. Still, however, there are *many adversaries*. Let us therefore beseech the God of all grace, that he would grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that thus the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. In the mean time, let us not be discouraged. The very existence of opposition proves that the kingdom of Satan is in danger.

2. How careful should we be, in all our transactions, to avoid even the appearance of evil ! How much injury is done to the cause of truth, when money, collected by the exertions of the poor, for religious purposes, is *thoughtlessly squandered*, or *unfaithfully applied* !

3. Let younger ministers endeavour to conduct themselves with such prudence and firmness, that no man shall be able to despise them. Under a consciousness of their own weakness, let them implore the aids of heavenly grace. And let all who are engaged in the work of the Lord, cherish towards each other sentiments of honour and esteem. Let none presume to interfere with the conscientious judgment of another, or conduct themselves towards those who are in inferior stations, as lords over God's heritage, instead of acting as examples to the flock.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 13—24.

CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE.

THE Apostle, being now about to draw his letter to a close, thinks it necessary once more to warn the Corinthians, in general terms, against the snares to which they were peculiarly exposed. 13. "Watch, (γρηγορεῖτε) stand fast (ῥημνύετε) in the faith; behave like men (ἀνδραγαθίαι); be strong (κραταιοῦσθε)." He here seems to imitate the style of a military commander, when about to lead his troops to attack the enemy. It is necessary that they should watch against being surprised—that they should *stand firm* in their ranks—that they should shew a *manly courage*, and that they should *put forth all the vigour of their arm*. Thus Joab exhorted the army of Israel: "Be of good courage, and *let us play the men*, for our people and for the cities of our God," (2 Sam. x. 12.); where the LXX read, ἀνδραζοῦ καὶ κραταιοῦσθε. So Agamemnon, exhorting the Greeks to fight, says, "ὦ φίλοι ἀνδρες ἰσθί, O friends shew yourselves men," (Iliad, b. 5. l. 529) In the same manner, it is the duty of christian soldiers to *watch* against the seducing arts of false teachers—the temptations of Satan—the allurements of the world, and the deceitfulness of indwelling sin, as persons surrounded by enemies, who are every moment ready to surprise them; it is also necessary that they should *stand fast* in the profession of the Gospel, whatever dangers or obstacles may lie in their way. They must *play the men* for their Lord, and shew an *undaunted courage* and resolution in the strength of divine grace, (Eph. vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 1. Phil. iv. 13.) If this admonition was proper for the disciples at Corinth, it is equally needful for us. We have the same enemies to contend with; and the same vigilance, perseverance, and courage are required. We can have no assurance of salvation, if we indulge in sloth or vain confidence; and that prayer is necessary for all, "Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me," (Ps. cxix. 133.)

The Apostle had been obliged to point out many improprieties in the spirit and conduct of the Corinthians, and to enforce many

duties to which they might feel a natural aversion. They might therefore be disposed to evade his admonitions, or to indulge in harsh reflections against each other, as the cause of the prevailing disorders. But he points out to them a more excellent way, and reminds them of that heavenly grace of charity which he had before so finely described, (chap. xiii.) as of the utmost importance in the management of their concerns, both as individuals and as a church. The 14th verse is well rendered by Doddridge, "Let all your affairs be transacted in love." This would render every duty easy, and every burden light. It was particularly necessary in proceeding to rectify abuses, or to execute the laws of Christ against offenders. By cherishing a spirit of *mutual esteem*, they would best be preserved from those evils which at present prevailed among them. Instead of fomenting divisions they would be ready to counsel and assist each other; and would thus present an impenetrable front to the enemy. We naturally feel a pleasure in obliging those whom we love—we rejoice in being able to do them a service, and are ready to undergo any sacrifice that may prove our regard, and secure their affection. We admire their amiable qualities—we bear with their infirmities, and cast the mantle of oblivion over their faults. It is the universal prevalence of *love* that constitutes the harmony and blessedness of heaven: and the general exercise of the same spirit would restore peace on earth—would serve to commend the Gospel—to stop the mouths of adversaries, to adorn and enlarge the church, and to promote the glory of God.

The Apostle now commends, to their affectionate remembrance the *family of Stephanas*, of whom mention had been made, (chap. i. 16.) They did not need to be *informed*, that these persons were among the earliest converts in Achaia, and might be considered as a kind of *earnest* of that abundant harvest of souls which had since been gathered in by the ministry of the Apostle and his fellow labourers. They ought therefore to be highly respected, as the *elder brethren* of the church. They were entitled to esteem on another account, by their noble exertions to promote the welfare of their fellow christians: 15. "I beseech you brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits (*απαρχή*) of Achaia, and they have devoted themselves (*ὑπαξάντες*) to the ministry or service, (*διακονίας*) of the saints.") Some have thought, that these pious individuals had dedicated their time and property to the

relief of the sick and poor. It is more likely, from what follows, in the 16th verse, that they had devoted their lives to the *preaching of the Gospel*; and this was a great mark of their courage and self-denial in those perilous times. Thus they were an extensive blessing, to the church, and, as a family, afforded a bright example of the power of true religion; this ought to endear them the more to every genuine christian, especially to those who enjoyed the benefit of their ministry; therefore he adds, "that ye submit (*υποτασσάμενοι*) yourselves to such, and to every fellow-labourer and worker (*συνεργούς και κοπιούς*)."
Those who were thus occupied were entitled to a peculiar share of affectionate sympathy and respect, as being engaged in a common cause with the Apostle himself, and greatly beloved by him for their work's sake. Indeed, every faithful pastor should be held in reputation by the churches of Christ.

The Apostle now alludes to certain members of the Corinthian church, who had lately come to Ephesus, and who had afforded him much gratification by their visit. 17. "I rejoice (*χαίρω*) in the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, for these have supplied your deficiency (*αντελήρωσαν το ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα*)."
It is supposed that these persons had brought the letter referred to, chap. vii. 1.; and it is probable, as observed in the postscript, that they, along with Titus, were the bearers of the Apostle's answer. At any rate, they had given him a more full and impartial account of the state of the church at Corinth, than he could have drawn from the church itself. It is natural to think, that some abuses had been but slightly touched on by the church in their epistle, and others, from mistaken policy, carefully concealed. The suspicion of this, would increase the fears of the Apostle respecting their real state; but the additional information received from these persons, set their conduct in a more favourable light, and afforded great satisfaction to Paul himself, whose mind was thus greatly relieved: Nor could the Corinthians themselves be insensible of the kindness thus done to them. In consequence of this well-timed service, they were greatly indebted to those pious individuals, and ought to recognize them as faithful servants of Christ. 18. "For," says he, "they have refreshed my spirit and yours; wherefore acknowledge such persons." Some think the expression, "they have supplied your deficiency," means, that the presence of these brethren had made up the loss which

the Apostle had sustained by being separated from the Corinthian church. Dr McKnight paraphrases the first clause of the 18th verse thus: "They have refreshed my spirit, and will refresh yours by informing you of my health." Mr Scott gives a more natural turn to the words: The brethren here mentioned had refreshed the *Apostle's spirit* by their pious conversation, as their company, doubtless, had frequently refreshed *them*.

He now adds the salutation of the churches in Lesser Asia, of which, that of Ephesus was one of the most flourishing, whence this Epistle was written. 19. "The churches of Asia salute (or embrace, *ασπάζονται*) you." The primitive christians took a lively interest in each others' welfare, though personally unknown. Nor were these salutations mere expressions of course, or empty compliments; they conveyed the real sentiments of those by whom they were employed. These little societies were united in the closest bonds, not so much by uniformity of worship, as by *mutual affection*; they resembled different branches of one family, widely scattered, indeed, but animated by a common feeling of affectionate regard. He particularly conveys the cordial good wishes of *two individuals*, whose names shall be had in everlasting remembrance, as intimate friends of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. "Aquila and Priscilla, salute you much in the Lord with the church in their house, (*κατ' οίκον αὐτῶν*)." This excellent couple the Apostle had first met with at Corinth, Acts xviii. 2. They were now residing at Ephesus, and after some time we find them again settled in Rome, (Rom. xvi. 3.) "The church in their house" may signify either the pious members of their own family, or part of the church members who lodged with them, or a distinct society which met there, at stated times, for social worship, similar to our fellowship meetings. It can hardly be supposed that the whole of the church at Ephesus could meet in a private house, or, that separate churches were formed there at so early a period. Yet the expression shews that the word *church* is applicable to two or three individuals met together in the name of Christ. The same expression occurs Rom. xvi. 3, 5. which seems to confirm the *first* view above given, that it refers to the converted members of their family. In Rom. xvi. 14, 15, however, we read of Asyncritus, Plegon, &c. *and the brethren who are with them*, and of Philologus, and Julia, &c. and all the saints *that are with them*,

which might seem to sanction the *second* interpretation. In short, the Corinthian church was so well known, and so highly esteemed, that *all the christians* in those quarters took a lively interest in their welfare, and desired to be affectionately remembered to them. 20. "All the brethren salute you."

The Apostle further commands them to lay aside their frivolous disputes, and unhappy differences, and to embrace each other, according to the custom of the times, with sentiments of pure and hallowed affection: "Salute one another with a holy kiss (*ἡ ἀγιωμένη ἀγκαλίς*)."
It is certain that the form of salutation here referred to, was observed in the churches for some ages; but was at length abandoned, on account probably of the abuses to which it gave rise. When dissension, formality, licentiousness, and conformity to the world, prevailed, it would cease to be the genuine expression of Christian love. It has been attempted to revive this practice in modern times, but without attending to the difference of circumstances. In ancient times it was the customary mode of salutation with both sexes, (2 Sam. xx. 9.; xv. 5. Luke vii. 45.) and is so still in some countries. In *ours* it is considered as the pledge of natural affection between near relatives; and therefore cannot be recommended as a general practice in a religious assembly, without violating the feelings of natural modesty, and exposing religion to contempt. It can only be observed with propriety, in churches where the two sexes sit apart, but this seems inconsistent with the simplicity of Christian worship. The *spirit* of the precept evidently is, that christians, both in public and in private, are bound to observe, in their intercourse with each other, the customary forms of respectful salutation.

The Apostle, either to save time, or on account of the illegitimacy of his hand, generally employed an amanuensis, who either wrote from his lips, or transcribed from the original draught in the hand writing of Paul, (Rom. xvi. 22. 2 Thess. iii. 17). To prevent mistake or forgery, he added *his own salutation with his own hand*, as in verse 21. "The salutation of Paul with my own hand." But on the present occasion, before laying down the pen, he was led by his supreme regard to the Saviour, to pronounce a solemn malediction on those professors of the faith who were destitute of love to the Redeemer. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed—the Lord cometh, (*ὁ κύριος ἔρχεται*)." The first

of these words is Greek, the others are Syriac, and the phrase is thought by some to have been borrowed from a Jewish formula. They plainly intimate that love to Christ is the grand test of Christianity. Where this principle is in lively exercise, all his commandments will be cheerfully obeyed; but no superior knowledge or spiritual endowments will compensate for the want of it. The infinite glory and excellence of the Saviour, as well as his boundless compassion and grace, demand our highest admiration and love, and he who is disaffected to his person or government, shall incur the severest vengeance (Luke xix. 27.) he proves himself to be "a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction," he remains under the curse of the law, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that obey not his Gospel. Then the judgment written shall be executed.

But the Apostle was persuaded better things of his brethren at Corinth; and therefore he prays that they might enjoy the *favour* of this divine Redeemer, who has promised to make his grace sufficient for his people, and to be with them always even unto the end of the world. 23. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Such expressions clearly intimate the proper deity of Christ. He had formerly represented Him as the object of supreme love, and now he speaks of him as the sovereign dispenser of grace, and the proper object of worship. This is the general form of the apostolic benedictions. Finally, the Apostle assures them *all* of his sincere esteem, of which the faithful admonitions he had previously administered were the genuine proof. 24. "My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." In the English version, this verse is rendered "my love *be* with you," &c.; but he certainly meant to convey the assurance of his *present affection*, and this cannot so properly be thrown into the form of a prayer. We have already shewn that the postscript is of no authority. Timothy is mentioned as one of the bearers of the letter, though it would appear that he had gone *before*. It has also been proved that the Epistle was written at Ephesus, not at Philippi.

REFLECTIONS.

1. On a review of the contents of this letter we may remark

the rapid spread of Christianity. Within a few years after our Lord's ascension, a flourishing church is collected in one of the most licentious cities of Greece. The ordinances are regularly administered, and teachers appointed, endowed with suitable gifts. Every circumstance proves the genuineness of the Epistle; the numerous allusions that are made to local circumstances; the specification of particular abuses; the evident appearance of sincerity and frankness in the Apostle's style, as well as the sublimity and excellence of the sentiments expressed. The faithfulness of the writer is particularly conspicuous. He manifests, throughout, the greatest concern for the honour of the Gospel, for the purity of the church, and for the glory of God. He speaks the language of one who is determined to do his duty, without regarding his own interest or the opinions of men. We also perceive the *early tendency to corruption* that appeared in the christian church. Even in the Apostle's day, the *mystery of iniquity* was at work; the beauty of the Gospel was impaired by philosophic subtilties, and the most important and consolatory doctrines were assailed. But the New Testament provides for the correction of these abuses: and it is the duty of the disciples of Christ to *recur* to the principles there laid down, and to use the means there provided for restoring the church to its primitive spirituality and beauty.

2. Do we love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity? How important the enquiry! He is worthy of our highest regard, whether we consider the glory of his person, the value of his atonement, the suitableness of his mediatorial offices, or the excellence of his laws. May he henceforth dwell in our hearts by faith, "that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the height and depth, the breadth and length, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," (Eph. iii. 17, 18.) May we ever implore his grace, both for ourselves and others; and thus, strengthened, established, and settled, may he bring us to his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

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LECTURES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE first and second Epistles to the Corinthians are intimately connected, whether we consider the occasion on which they were written, or the subjects of which they treat. This letter seems to have been written a very short time after the former, at the distance of a few months, or at most a year, (chap. ix. 2.) When the Apostle sent his first epistle, he contemplated a further stay in Ephesus, from which place he designed to set out for Macedonia, and to spend the winter in Corinth, (1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6.) In consequence, however, of the tumult excited by Demetrius, the silversmith, he was compelled to leave Ephesus sooner than he intended, (Acts xx. 1.) In the mean time, he had sent forward Titus to the church at Corinth, to enforce the exhortations contained in the first epistle, and to observe what effect it would have on their minds. Arriving at Troas, a sea-port town lying between Ephesus and Macedonia, he there expected to meet with Titus again, on his return from Corinth; (chap. ii. 12.) but hearing no tidings of him, he became very uneasy: and notwithstanding the great success that attended his ministry at Troas, he left that city, and went forward into Macedonia, in the hope of meeting his esteemed brother. Here, at first, he was greatly oppressed with *inward fears* and *outward conflicts*, not knowing how the Corinthians might stand affected towards him, on account of his faithful reproofs; but from this painful state of anxiety his mind was happily relieved, by the arrival of Titus, and by the very favourable report communicated by him, respecting the disposition of the Corinthian church. Thus his fears were dissipated, and his heart was filled with gratitude to God, who had enabled him boldly to discharge his duty towards them, (chap. vii. 6.) He therefore lost no time in writing this second Epistle, to assure them of his forgiveness and love, to explain the cause of his delaying his intended visit, to recommend the restoration of the incestuous person, who had been excluded from their communion, and who now displayed unequivocal signs of repentance, (chap. ii. 7.) to encourage them to finish their collection for the poor saints in Judea, (chap. viii. and ix.) to establish still further his authority as an apostle, in opposition to the pretensions of the false teachers,

(chap. x. xi. and xii.) and to prepare them for his second visit, when he expected that their contributions would be ready, and their disorders fully rectified. In this Epistle, we discover the same ardour of affection towards the disciples at Corinth which is displayed in the former—the same enlightened zeal for the honour of the Gospel—the same undaunted boldness in administering reproof. The first six chapters are highly practical, the rest have a more immediate reference to the state of the Corinthian church, and on this account may, at first, appear less interesting; but the rules laid down, especially regarding the contribution for the poor, are of general and permanent application; and the whole discourse is interspersed with reflections of the most pious and weighty nature. The third chapter exhibits a beautiful contrast between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, proving the superior glory of the Gospel. In the fourth and fifth, the Apostle unfolds the spring of his consolation amidst the trials and discouragements he met with, namely the certain prospect of eternal happiness. Sometimes he appears to adopt the style of keen irony, (chap. xi. 19, 20.) and to indulge in the language of sharp rebuke; but in these passages he is to be viewed as addressing the refractory part of the church, who were still disposed to reject his authority, and to maintain the credit of the factious teachers. To those who were *faithful*, “he opens his mouth and enlarges his heart,” as unto his dear children. The confidence with which he asserts the reality of those miraculous powers which were conferred upon him as an apostle, and exhibited among the Corinthians in confirmation of his testimony, affords a striking proof of the divine origin of Christianity, whilst the evident reluctance with which he adduces these marks of his apostleship displays, in an interesting light, the humility of his mind.

It would appear, from the general scope of the Epistle, that it was written while Paul was in Macedonia, shortly after the arrival of Titus; and it was conveyed by the same messenger, whom the Apostle again sent before him, to perfect the work of reformation at Corinth, (chap. viii. 17, 18.) With regard to the date of this letter, it is fixed by Macknight to the summer of the year 57; by others it is supposed to have been written so late as the year 61. On such a point, positive certainty is neither important nor attainable.

LECTURES,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—11.

INTRODUCTION.

IN proceeding to address the Corinthian converts, Paul, as in his first letter, asserts his authority as *an Apostle of Jesus Christ*, which he ascribes to the *will of God*, who had displayed his divine sovereignty in calling him to the knowledge of the Gospel, and appointing him to this honourable office, notwithstanding his former opposition to the truth. Thus he did not derive his commission from man, but could appeal to the direct interposition of Him, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” He joins the name of *Timothy* with his own, in the inscription, that “by the mouth of two witnesses every word might be established.” From 1 Epis. iv. 17. it would appear that Timothy had been sent to Corinth to rectify the prevailing disorders; but he had now returned, and was able, from personal observation, to confirm the reports which had reached the Apostle respecting the state of the church. Though a much younger man, and holding an inferior office, Paul, with great modesty, styles Timothy his *brother*, thus putting honour upon him in the view of the Corin-

thian church, and recognizing him as a faithful minister of Christ. The Epistle is addressed "to the church of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in all (ἐν) Achaia." It does not appear whether there were other churches in that province, regularly organized, or not: But there were many *individuals* who professed the Gospel, and in whose welfare the Apostle was deeply interested. These might take a copy of the letter for their own use, to be read for their private improvement, or in their occasional assemblies. The truths it contained were of general concernment, but they were more particularly applicable to the circumstances of the *church* which had been planted in Corinth, the chief city.

2. According to his usual practice, in place of the ordinary salutation of health, he prays that "grace and peace might be to them, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The enjoyment of the divine favour is of more importance than any earthly blessing. We are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find *grace* to help in time of need. Jehovah is also revealed as the God of *peace*, who is able to give peace to the troubled conscience, and to calm the raging passions of the soul. These blessings are imparted by him as the common Father of his redeemed family. Our Saviour is also the proper object of worship, and the sole medium of divine communications; he has promised to make his *grace* sufficient for us, and to perfect his strength in our weakness; he it is who says, "Peace I leave with you, *my peace* I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Without further preface, the Apostle breaks forth, in the language of holy exultation and gratitude, while reflecting on the peace and comfort which he had enjoyed, in the midst of his many trials for the sake of Christ: 3, 4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies (οἰκτιρῶν), and the God of all comfort (παράκλησις); who comforteth us in all our tribulation (θλίψις), that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble (ἐν πανθὶ θλίψις), by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted (ἐν ὧν) by God." Jehovah is here addressed as "the God and Father of the Lord Jesus," who, by assuming our nature, became the first-born among many brethren, and stands in a similar relation to his Father with his chosen people. "His Father is our Father, and his God our

God." Not only did he reveal *His* character and will to man, but it was his delight to finish the work which the Father gave him to do, and to hold communion with him by meditation and prayer. What an interesting view is here given of the character of God! He is represented not only as infinitely powerful, but as infinitely good; dispensing both temporal and spiritual blessings to the children of men—he desires not the death of the sinner, but would rather that he would turn unto him and live—his bowels of compassion yearn towards the guilty and the undeserving—he is kind to the evil and to the unthankful, and exercises the pity of a Father towards those that fear him. When our sins might have roused his wrath, he speaks to us in the sweet accents of love—he proclaims himself as the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth; all the dispensations of his providence confirm this, but in the Gospel of Christ, he especially appears as "delighting in mercy." The Apostle further describes Him as "the God of all consolation." In all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted. He speaks peace to their souls, by granting the free remission of sins; he comforts them by the exhilarating influences of the Holy Spirit, and by the rich communications of his grace. He is able to bind up the broken-hearted, to heal the most painful wounds, and to inspire with hope and joy under the most weighty sorrows. He has an intimate knowledge of all his creatures, and knows how to apportion his grace to our necessities. Having ready access to the heart, he can dry up all the hidden springs of grief, and restore to the mind the joys of his salvation. He can provide for our safety in every extremity, and when every earthly refuge fails, he is still our present help and all-sufficient portion. By *him* the Apostle and his fellow-labourers had often been supported and comforted in the prosecution of their arduous work, which excited them to *bless* his holy name; he had consoled them in *all* their affliction, whether arising from the persecution of the world, or from the troubles of the church, so that they considered themselves well recompensed for their toils, and had no reason to doubt of the heavenly source, whence their comfort flowed. It was evidently derived "from God." This *was* imparted, not for their personal benefit merely, but to *fit* them, by experience, to sympathise with the distressed, whom they could direct to the same springs of consolation which they had

found so abundant in their own case, "that they might be able to comfort them in every trouble, by the consolation wherewith they themselves were comforted of God." The Apostle, no doubt, has a reference to the joy which the repentance of the Corinthians had afforded him. It has been often remarked, that those persons are most able to enter into the feelings of the afflicted, who have themselves been placed in similar circumstances. This sentiment is well expressed by the Latin Poet: "*Nos ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.*" It is observed of our Saviour, "We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tried as we are, yet without sin;" and again, "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted," Heb. iv. 15.; ii. 18. Such knowledge is peculiarly advantageous to the christian pastor, to enable him to speak a word in season to the sorrowful soul. Individuals who have passed through great distress of mind, when first awakened to a sense of their guilt, can best feel for those who are suffering "the terrors of the Lord;" those who have been harassed with sore temptations, are best qualified to comfort those who are exposed to the assaults of the wicked one. In the same manner, sympathy is excited towards those who are assailed by persecution, or who are suffering under bodily trouble, or who are bewailing the loss of friends, or who have been deprived of their worldly substance. Hence we perceive the wisdom of God in permitting natural evil; by means of the "fiery trial" the soul is humbled and refined, and a kindly sympathy is diffused through all the members of the body of Christ.

Paul and his companions were indeed called to endure an extraordinary measure of distress; they were placed in the front of the battle, and stood foremost in every danger; but on this very account, a greater share of spiritual joy was imparted to them, so that their happiness seemed to increase with their troubles: 5. "For as the sufferings of Christ (*παινήματα του Χριστου*) abound in us, (*ως ημεας*) so through Christ (*διου*) our consolation also aboundeth." Thus it is said of Stephen, shortly before his death, that he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ready to receive his departing spirit, (Acts vii. 55.)—the apostles departed from the presence of the

council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, (chap v. 41.) During another season of persecution, it is said, "the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost," (chap. xiii. 52.) and of the believing Hebrews it is remarked, "they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," (Heb. x. 34.) The sufferings which the apostles endured, are called *Christ's sufferings*, as being sustained in his cause, as being inflicted on the same account, because he considers them as offered to himself, and sympathises with his people as members of his mystical body. So the *consolation* of believers springs from Christ, he makes his power to rest upon them, he grants them the tokens of his special presence, they rejoice in the assurance of his power, his faithfulness and love, in the advancement of his kingdom, and in the hope of meeting him in glory.

In the sufferings of the apostles, the Lord had a further end in view, namely, the *welfare of his church*. 6. "But whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is wrought out (*ἐκ τῶν συμφορῶν*) by the endurance (*ἢ ὑπομνήσεως*) of the same afflictions which we also suffer, or whether we be comforted; it is for your consolation and salvation." By the patience and fortitude displayed by their beloved teachers under trouble, the disciples were animated to *endure* the same hardships with *cheerfulness*, and thus their *spiritual improvement* was advanced, just as the fatigues and dangers encountered by a favourite general, in the field, stimulate the courage of his soldiers, and reconcile their minds to all the privations of war. Thus the branch is pruned to render it more fruitful, (John xv. 2.) the gold is tried by the fire, to separate the base alloy, (1 Pet. i. 6, 7.) and the affliction which, "for the present, seemeth not joyous but grievous, afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness," (Heb. xii. 11.) The same design was promoted by the *comfort* afforded to the apostles under their sufferings. This proved the truth and excellence of the Gospel, the presence and power of God, and the undoubted sincerity of those who could manifest such astonishing composure of mind in the most trying circumstances. By this means, the disciples were encouraged to hope for the same support and deliverance when exposed to similar dangers.

The Corinthians, notwithstanding their outward prosperity,

were liable to many severe trials in their christian course; but the Apostle expresses his firm confidence that they would continue *stedfast*, and be sustained and refreshed by the same rich consolations which were imparted to him: 7. "And our hope concerning (ὑπὲρ) you is firm (βέβαια), knowing that as ye are partakers (κοινωνοὶ) of the sufferings, so also (shall ye be) of the consolation."

The Apostle wished them to understand that he had lately been exposed to dangers of the most threatening and appalling nature: 8. "For we do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning our trouble which came upon us in Asia, that we were pressed (or weighed down, *κατασθέντες*) beyond measure (καὶ ὑπερβαλόντες) above strength, so that we despaired (*ἐκπαροχθόμενοι*) even of life." It is generally thought that he here refers to the *tumult* at Ephesus in Lesser Asia, (Acts xix. 23.) It is very true, that no mention is made in the history of the Acts, of any personal violence offered to the Apostle on that occasion; but it is evident, from the entire passage, that the whole city was in a state of violent commotion, in which it is highly probable that Paul's life was in imminent danger. This is well illustrated by Dr Paley in his observations on the text, (*Horæ Paulinæ*, 2 Cor. No. 3.) The gathering tempest seemed ready every moment to burst on his head, and he had given up all hopes of escaping with his life. He viewed himself as a dead man, and saw, more clearly than ever, the necessity of giving up every other ground of confidence, and of exercising a simple dependence on that Almighty Friend "to whom belong the issues from death." 9. "But we had the sentence (*ἀποκρίματα*, the answer) of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." By this turn of expression, the Apostle intimates, that the doctrine of the resurrection, which he had formerly proved (1 Epis. chap. xv.), is admirably fitted to support the mind under the heaviest calamities. Nor was his hope disappointed. The same gracious Being who had often appeared for his relief, was then pleased to rescue him from *so terrible a danger*. He was *now* manifesting his power by new and unexpected proofs of his goodness, and this left no room to doubt that he would continue to preserve him till his work was finished, and bring him to his heavenly kingdom: 10. "Who delivered us from *so great a death* (*τῆς ὀλέθρου θανάτου*) and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will

yet deliver." In accomplishing so desirable an object, the prayers of his fellow christians were of the greatest advantage: By this means they would materially contribute to his safety; and he had no doubt they would be ready to *help him*, by their united and fervent supplications, at the throne of grace. Thus he would be effectually shielded from the attacks of his enemies, and his life would be preserved for usefulness in the church. The gift thus bestowed on him, in answer to the prayers of the faithful, would excite the grateful acknowledgements of thousands on his behalf, who might hereafter be benefited by his ministry: 11. "Ye also helping together (*συνεργουσαντες*, *adjuvantibus*) for us by prayer, that the gift (bestowed) on us through many persons (*α πολλοι προσευχοντες*), may be thankfully acknowledged (*ευχαριστουμεν*) by many on our behalf." How evidently does the Apostle recognise the special providence of God, in the deliverances wrought out for him, and how high a value does he set on the prayers of his brethren, as the appointed means of obtaining all temporal and spiritual benefits!

REFLECTIONS.

1. How suitable are the discoveries of the Gospel to the condition of man! Are we sinful and helpless creatures? We are encouraged to hope for "grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Are we in heaviness through manifold troubles? He is revealed as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." Let us cast all our burdens on Him, and He will sustain. Why should we distrust his pity, or limit his power? "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" No, blessed be his name, he is still able to comfort us in all our affliction. Does he enable us thus to rejoice, in the midst of abounding trials? let us impart to others the benefit of our experience, and recount the mercies we have received, for their comfort and salvation. Let the proofs we have had of the goodness of God in times past, encourage us to hope that he will yet deliver us from danger, that he will never leave us nor forsake us. But do we not know what it is to be partakers of Christ's sufferings? Have we hitherto shunned the offence of the cross? It is not to be wondered at; that we are strangers to the *consolations* that are derived

from him. In proportion as our trials increase, we may look for more abundant supplies of grace.

2. How astonishing the perseverance of the Apostle! He still goes on with his work, though at the hazard of his life: "Neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword," could quench the ardour of his zeal, or extinguish his love to the Saviour. When nothing but death was before him, he still trusted in God, and rejoiced in the hope of eternal life.

3. It is the duty of christian churches to unite in prayer for their pastors, and for each other, especially in times of persecution, and when a favourable answer is granted, to abound in thanksgivings on their behalf.

4. We may not be exposed to any visible danger, but we are under "the sentence of death" in consequence of sin. Our life is short and uncertain, and therefore, instead of trusting in ourselves, or in any created object, it is our wisdom, as well as our duty, to rely on that God who is able to save our souls from hell, and to raise our bodies from the grave.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—22.

PAUL ASSIGNS HIS REASONS FOR DELAYING HIS VISIT TO CORINTH.

THE Apostle had alluded to the severe troubles that happened to him in Asia, and to the many distresses he daily met with in the cause of Christ. But he was not, on this account, destitute of comfort;—he was favoured with the abundant consolations of the Gospel—he enjoyed the prayers of his fellow christians; and he now directs our attention to another source of peace, the consciousness of his own integrity. 12. "For our rejoicing (or boasting, *καυχουμε*) is this, the testimony of our conscience, that with simplicity and godly sincerity (sincerity of God, *ελαφροφρονως*), not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation (conducted ourselves, *συνεσφραμεν*) in the world, and more abundantly towards you." Many were ready to throw suspicion on his character and motives, and to hold him up as a

designing and dangerous person ; and even some professing Christians were prejudiced against him, on account of his zeal for the purity of the doctrines of Christ. This would have been an insupportable burden to his mind, had he been conscious to himself of pursuing, under the garb of piety, any worldly or selfish end. But he had the testimony of his own conscience, that his views and intentions were far otherwise. He conducted himself with the simplicity and *sincerity of God* ; that is, with the greatest openness and candour, with that frame of mind which He approves, and which became a servant of the God of truth—he lived as in his sight, with a single eye to His glory, as one who set the Lord always before him, and who knew that he must give an account of all his actions ; he did not regulate his conduct according to the maxims of worldly policy or “ carnal wisdom” (*σοφία σαρκική*), which teaches a man to silence the voice of conscience, to prefer his own interest or reputation to every other object, and to sacrifice, to his personal advantage, the interests of truth, the happiness of his fellow men, and the honour of God ; nor did he ascribe this attainment (as the heathen philosophers would have done) to his own virtuous resolutions, or natural goodness of disposition, but to the *grace of God*, by which he was upheld. Thus he had hitherto been enabled to maintain a consistent deportment *in the world*, in all places where he had laboured, and before all descriptions of men. This was evident from the hardships and sufferings which he had endured, without any prospect of earthly gain—his piety, disinterestedness, and faithfulness, were more *especially* displayed in the whole of his intercourse with the *Corinthians*, and it was therefore very ungenerous in them to throw suspicion on his character. He could appeal to them, as he does to the Thessalonians, respecting the rectitude of his conduct : “ Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe,” (1 Epis. ii. 10.) Had he consulted the dictates of “ fleshly wisdom,” he might easily have avoided the reproach and opposition connected with the apostolic office ; he might have continued in high reputation among the Jews, or have devoted his fine talents to the pursuits of wealth or fame ; he might have moulded his doctrine so as to suit the prevailing taste of mankind ; or, by affecting the graces of eloquence, or the subtilities of philosophy, have obscured the

simplicity of the Gospel to gain the applause of the world ; or, in the present instance, he might have overlooked the faults of the Corinthians, in order to ingratiate himself in their favour. But all these considerations were set aside, from a regard to the glory of God, which he steadily pursued, amidst every difficulty and every discouragement. This, then, was his *rejoicing* ; the testimony of his conscience to the simplicity and sincerity of his motives. Though, as to his acceptance with God, he had no ground of boasting *before him*, but that which arose from the atonement of Christ, yet he would rejoice in this inward testimony ; amidst the injurious insinuations of his enemies, as an evidence of the genuineness of his faith, and of the consistency of his character. Nothing is more dreadful than the agony of an accusing conscience ; on the other hand, where this internal monitor approves, it imparts unspeakable consolation under any circumstances. On this principle, the holy composure and joy of the primitive martyrs, are easily accounted for.

13, 14. The enemies of Paul seem to have insinuated, that he wrote inambiguous and doubtful language—in other words, that he said one thing and meant another. But this charge he boldly disclaims : “ For we write no other things unto you than what ye read (*ἀναγιγνωσκete*, ye know—*Doddridge*) and acknowledge, and I hope that ye will acknowledge even to the end.” In what he wrote in his first epistle respecting his intention of visiting Corinth, and in what he was now about to say regarding his change of purpose, he wished them to understand his words in their plain and obvious meaning. The same might be said of the disorders which he had pointed out—he had written nothing but what they *knew* to be fact ; and he was happy to find they readily *acknowledged* it as such. In this opinion he trusted they would *continue* during their whole lives. Some of them indeed were disposed to discredit his authority as an apostle, and to calumniate his character, notwithstanding all that he had said, but the majority of the Corinthian converts entertained towards him sentiments of affectionate respect, and *rejoiced* in him and his fellow-labourers as distinguished ornaments of the church ; “ they had *acknowledged* him in part, that he was their boasting,” that is, a part of them had owned him to be a faithful servant of Christ, by *readily* submitting to his authority : nor was any affection lost between the parties, for he could assure them, that notwithstanding the

reproofs he had been obliged to administer, he was well satisfied with their conduct in general, he rejoiced in their conversion to the faith, in their stedfastness, zeal, and love; and trusted that he would be honoured to present them to his divine Master, as his hope and joy and crown of rejoicing, in the day of his appearing. "Ye also (shall be) our boasting in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Entertaining this confident persuasion of their esteem, and of their ready obedience to Christ, he had purposed to visit them a second time, in order to promote their advancement in the faith, and to impart a greater measure of spiritual gifts for their edification. 15. "And in this persuasion (πιστοιθεσιν), I purposed (εβουλομην) to come to you formerly (προτιπον, first,) that ye might have a second benefit (χρηρ, gift)." He was willing even to go out of his way, while passing to and from Macedonia, that he might have an opportunity of meeting with the church at Corinth, not doubting of their readiness to assist him at his departure, for Judea, with every thing necessary for his intended journey with the collections for the poor saints. This seems to be the meaning of the 16th verse, "And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again from Macedonia unto you, and by you to be sent forward (τραπημθηναι) into Judea." In the first Epistle, chap. xvi. 7., he says, "I will not see you now by the way;" and some accordingly understand the first clause of this verse to signify, "I will pass by Corinth without touching at it, in my way to Macedonia;" but it has been observed, that the direct road to Macedonia from Ephesus was by way of Troas, which was the route the Apostle actually took; and the more natural meaning of the words seems to be, that he meant to call at Corinth, both in going and returning. In this case, he might, as Dr Doddridge observes, have altered his intention since the date of his first letter. Instead, however, of following the plan here laid down, the Apostle, being obliged to leave Ephesus abruptly, had gone to Macedonia by way of Troas, and had deferred his visit to Corinth for the present. This change of purpose was eagerly laid hold of by the disaffected party in that church, to his prejudice, as if he were a man of an inconstant mind, whose word was not to be relied on, and who made promises in a light and thoughtless manner, without any serious intention of carrying them into effect. This captious objection he proceeds to

obviate, and explains his reasons for not having come to Corinth at the time he had first proposed. 17. "When I therefore was thus minded, (purposed this, *ταυτο βουλευομενος*), did I use levity (*ιλαφεια*) or the things which I purpose do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?" He denies that he had formed his first resolution in a *light* and inconsiderate spirit, for he had fully resolved, at the time, to act upon it. He was not in the habit of forming his plans *according to the dictates of human policy*, or the inclinations of animal nature, and then changing them, in a wanton or capricious manner, so as to suit his own interest or convenience. He was not one of those who promised or refused as might best answer the present end, or who *affirmed and denied* the same thing at different times. That which he solemnly confirmed, according to the custom of the Jews, with a *yea, yea*, he would not subsequently overthrow by the contrary asseveration of *nay, nay*. Dr Mac-knight translates the passage, "so as with me yea should be yea, and nay, nay, as it suits my designs?" but the other interpretation seems more natural, and renders the supplement unnecessary. It is also more consistent with what follows.

The supposition here made was contrary to the known *principles* and character of the Apostle. He could appeal to the *truth* of God, as to the consistency and harmony of the doctrines which he had taught them. 18, 19. "But as God is faithful (*πιστος*), our word towards you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached (*κηρυχθεις*) among you by us, namely, by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in (or by, *α*) him was yea." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the great *subject* of his preaching and that of his fellow-labourers; he was *proclaimed* by them as the faithful and true witness, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" *by his assistance* they had exhibited the truths relating to his person, character, and work, as being, like their divine author, faithful and unchangeable. Particularly, they had shewn, that all the *blessings* of the new covenant were ratified and confirmed by his blood, and would receive their full accomplishment, in the experience of his people, to the praise of the divine perfections, as displayed in the gospel published by them. 20. "For all the promises of God (*οσα επαγγελιας θειου*, "whatever promises of God were preached by us," *McKnight*) are in him yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." The word

yea was used by the Greeks, and the word *amen* by the Hebrews, to confirm the truth of any thing: and to both Jews and Gentiles the *promises* are made. In like manner, all the *predictions* concerning the person and work of the Messiah, his birth, life, doctrine, miracles, resurrection, and ascension, had been remarkably fulfilled, and all the blessings promised, through his mediation, respecting the pardon, sanctification, and final happiness of believers, shall, in due time, be certainly realized. The honour of the divine wisdom, faithfulness, love, and power, is involved in their accomplishment.

Of this salvation they had already received the *earnest*, in the confirmation of their faith, and in the gift of the Spirit: 21, 22. "Now he that confirmeth (*βεβαιων*) us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and hath given the earnest (*αρραβων*) of the Spirit in our hearts." This is paraphrased by Dr. McKnight, "Now he who establisheth my authority with you, as an Apostle of Christ, and who hath consecrated me to that high office by the gifts of the Spirit, is God," &c. But it is evidently the design of the Apostle to include his fellow christians at Corinth, as joint partakers with him of the blessings here specified. "God had established them with him," consequently, he speaks not of what belonged *exclusively* to him as an apostle, but of the common privilege of believers. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit cannot be considered as the seal and earnest of eternal happiness, for they were sometimes conferred on those who apostatized from the faith. All true christians are spoken of as *anointed of God*, 1 John ii. 20, 27. But the Apostles, in common with other saints, had been established in the faith of Christ, and thus spiritually united *to him* by the power and grace of God,—he had anointed them as kings and priests to himself with the Holy Spirit of promise; he had marked them, with his own signet, as his peculiar property and devoted servants, and he had thus stamped his image on their souls. The enlightening, purifying, and consolatory influences of the Spirit, were the *first fruits* or *earnest* of that glory to which they would finally be exalted. The holy Spirit dwells in the heart of God's people as a spirit of knowledge, holiness, and joy—he witnesses with their spirit that they are the children of God—he helps their infirmities in prayer, and comforts them in all their tribulation. The *αρραβων*, or *earnest*, was a pledge given when a servant was hired,

or a possession purchased, that in due time the stipulations would be fulfilled. The same figure is employed, Ephes. i. 13, 14. "In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, or people."

The Apostle now assigns the true reason of his change of purpose, which was, *the present state* of the Corinthian church. In doing this he solemnly confirms what he was about to say, by an appeal to the Searcher of hearts, who was witness to the sincerity of his soul, and would not fail to punish any violation of the truth. 23. "But I invoke God as a witness on my soul, that to spare you (*φιλοψυχος*, participle), I came not as yet to Corinth." Nothing but the vast importance of maintaining his apostolic authority would have induced him to use such strong language; for if this were denied or undermined by any reflection on his character, it is evident his usefulness would have been at an end. This example, with many others, both in the Old and New Testament, shews that there is nothing morally sinful in attesting the truth by an oath, when the solemnity of the occasion calls for it. This, however, is a very different thing from the profane practice of confirming every common remark by an appeal to Heaven, staking the salvation of the soul on a matter of uncertainty or of trivial importance. This is pointedly condemned by our Saviour, and by the Apostle James, (Matt. v. 36, 37. James v. 12.) Dr M'Knight translates the verse, "I call on God as a witness against my soul, (*τὸν μὲν ψυχῶν*)," but the sense is nearly the same, and the leading sentiment appears to be, that God takes notice of the secret thoughts of the heart. It was in order to spare the church the pain of apostolic censure, that he had not come at the time he first specified. He found there were many disorders among them that required correction,—discipline was neglected, parties were formed, and Paul himself was treated with some degree of contempt. Had he come to them in this state, he must have been constrained to use the language of sharp rebuke; probably, it would have been necessary to excommunicate the refractory, or even to inflict miraculous judgments. Now, the Apostle wished first to ascertain what effect his letter would have; he wished to give them time for *reflection*, when he hoped they would see the propriety of rectifying the existing abuses, and of returning to their duty. This would render it a much easier task to settle the

remaining affairs of the church at a future period, and would render his visit far more pleasant both to himself and to them.

When he spoke of *sparing* them, he did not mean to say that the *faith* of Christ gave him and his fellow-labourers any arbitrary power over the minds of the disciples, or warranted any interference with the rights of conscience; far less did it establish any dominion over their bodies or estates, as was afterwards absurdly claimed by the Romish church. 24. "Not that we lord it (*κυρινοῦμεν*) over your faith." This is rendered by M'Knight, "not because we lord it over you through the faith," and he proposes to supply the preposition *διὰ*, or *ἐν*. In proof of this, he observes, that the apostles had power to direct the faith of all the people of God; but we ought not, without necessity, to admit such a solecism in the original language as is here supposed; and the received translation is certainly more natural. The word, *κυρινοῦμεν*, seems to be used in an unfavourable sense, for *arbitrary rule*, as distinguished from that enlightened submission which is produced by argument and conviction. In this sense, it is employed (1 Pet. v. 3.) with the intensive preposition *κατά*, where it is rendered, "Not as lords over God's heritage." So far from exercising a tyrannical dominion over their faith, the apostles were willing to be considered rather as "fellow helpers (*συνεργοί*, joint workers) of their joy." Though they spoke by immediate inspiration, and declared infallibly the will of God, they invited men to judge for themselves, and to try the spirits whether they were of God; nor did they require obedience to any rule which they could not shew to be of heavenly origin. Their ministry was designed for the establishment of believers in faith and holiness, and thus for the promotion of their spiritual *joy*. Even the acts of discipline, administered by them, were intended for the good of the church. The Corinthians had boldly professed the faith, amidst many discouragements, and the Apostle was willing to hope that they still held fast their profession. So the following clause may signify, "For ye stand (or have stood *ἵστητε*) in the faith (*τῇ πίστει*);" or, according to the common translation, he reminds them, "that by faith they stand" in the favour and love of God. It was therefore of the utmost importance that they should continue to cherish right views of the Gospel, and to exercise a firm *belief* in those glorious truths which he had preached to them; for in this

way alone, could they overcome the temptations of the world, and be enabled to triumph over every danger. Thus the Apostle reminds the Romans, that the Jews had been cut off from their former privileges by unbelief, and that *they* stood by faith: wherefore he adds, "be not high minded, but fear," (Rom. xi. 20.) And in writing to the Hebrews, he exhorts them, from the example of the ancient Israelites, to take heed lest there be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, (chap. iii. 12.) So, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of the Gospel which they had believed, he says, "wherein (or whereby) ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain," (chap. xv. 2.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. How great the blessing of an approving conscience! In this we may still *rejoice*, though our motives should be misrepresented, and our characters aspersed. How pleasing the reflection, when the christian teacher is enabled, by divine grace, to have his conversation in the world, and among his own people, as it becometh the Gospel! In administering reproof, we should be careful neither to speak nor to write any thing but what the persons concerned must acknowledge to be true, and will be ready to remove. When mutual confidence is thus maintained, they may reasonably hope to rejoice in each other in the day of Christ.

2. The most upright of men may sometimes see reason to alter their first intention, in consequence of a change of circumstances; let us not be rash in imputing this to levity of temper, or disregard of truth. It may proceed from the best of motives, and may even be dictated by love to the souls of men. Let us not be hasty in inflicting censures, but allow time to the offender to reflect on the impropriety of his conduct, which will also enable us to consider the subject in a cool and dispassionate frame of mind.

3. How great the consolation arising from the faithfulness of God's promises! "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) In him all other blessings are secured, and all the promises are confirmed. They shall surely be fulfilled

in the happy experience of believers, "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Are our souls established in the faith of Christ? Have we been anointed and sealed by the Spirit? It is God himself who hath wrought in us this blessed change, and who hath given us this earnest of the future inheritance.

4. If even inspired apostles would enjoin nothing as an article of faith, without producing the proof of divine authority, no one now can claim dominion over the conscience, or convert the faith of Christ into an engine of oppression. We are commanded to call no man master or father upon earth; and we must stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. The belief of the Gospel produces the purest happiness, and the faithful pastor will esteem it his highest honour, if by any means he may promote his people's joy.

CHAPTER SECOND.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—11.

PAUL RECOMMENDS THE READMISSION OF THE PENITENT OFFENDER.

We have already had occasion to remark, that the Apostle, soon after the date of his first letter, had altered his original intention of visiting the church at Corinth, and of spending the winter in that city. This change of plan had been objected against him, by the refractory part of the church, as an instance of capricious levity. He had already shewn how contrary such a spirit was to the principles he held, and to the conduct he had ever pursued. He had then assigned the real cause of the delay, which pressed.

ed from a tender concern for their welfare, and from a reluctance to inflict apostolic censure.

He *now* observes, that, had he come to them, while in their former state, it would have greatly distressed his mind, to see so flourishing a church become the prey of errors and corruption, and the promising fruits of his labours so soon blasted; for he could not have beheld their disorderly conduct without the deepest concern. Even the *report* of their defections had excited very painful emotions—how greatly would these have been increased by the actual observation! When he first visited Corinth, his heart had been *gladdened* by their conversion to the faith, and by their cheerful obedience to the commands of Christ, and he would not willingly repeat his visit, under feelings of an opposite nature. He preferred, therefore, delaying his journey till they were brought to a better frame of mind, and wished that this should be effected rather by the force of conviction, than from dread of his authority. He accordingly observes: 1. “But I determined (*εγὼ οὖν*) this with myself, that I would not come to you again in grief (*ἐν λυπῇ*).” It is evident from this, and from what is said, chap. i. 15. that the Apostle had been only *once* at Corinth at the date of this letter. Of course, the word *πάλιν*, *again*, refers to his coming a second time, and not to the state of his mind during his first visit; as if he had said, “I resolved, in coming again, that I would not come with sorrow.” Dr Macknight refers the expression *in heaviness*, to the Corinthians, as if the Apostle’s coming would occasion sorrow to them: but it seems more natural, and more agreeable to the following verses, to explain it of Paul’s own state of mind. He was sensible that the reproofs contained in his former letter must have *grieved* the hearts of many;—still he was constrained, by his affection for their souls, to speak the whole truth, however unpleasant the announcement might be, and nothing could relieve his mind, but the manifest repentance of the individual who had sinned; how great then was his *joy*, when he understood that the offender had seen the evil of his conduct, and had bewailed, with unfeigned contrition, the injury which he done to the cause of Christ! In proportion as his former misconduct had *grieved* the heart of Paul, in the same proportion was the soul of this excellent man *gladdened* by the information of his sincere repentance. 2. “For if I make you sorry, (*λυπῶ*) who then is he that maketh me glad,

(*λυφειναι*), but he who is made sorry, (or is grieved *λυπουμενος*) by me?" It is generally thought that the Apostle here alludes to the incestuous person, who had been cut off from the communion of the church, but who now shewed signs of true penitence. Yet out of delicacy, he neither mentions the name of the individual, nor the nature of the offence with which he stood chargeable. He had judged it needful to address them by letter on this very subject, to point out to them the path of duty, and to enforce the observance of the institutions of Christ, lest, owing to the neglect of these, he should have been obliged, when present, to withhold his confidence from them; and then, instead of rejoicing over them, as he might have done had they been obedient, he would have to *mourn over* their defection from the truth. But he had this confidence in their attachment *generally*, that he was persuaded none of them would willingly grieve him, but, on the contrary, would be as happy to promote his comfort as their own; therefore it was only necessary to remind them of their duty, to secure their compliance. 3. "And I wrote to you this very thing (*ταυτο αυτο*), lest when I came I should have sorrow from those of whom I ought to rejoice, being persuaded (*πεισθεις*) of you all, that my joy is (the joy) of you all." With great kindness, he includes the *whole* church in this commendation, though he had too much reason to be dissatisfied with some individuals.

His former letter contained many pointed and severe reproofs, and nothing but a sense of duty could have constrained him to use this style. The writing of it had cost him much acute pain of mind, and *abundance of tears*; and had he consulted his own inclination *merely*, he would either have refrained from sending it altogether, or would have addressed them in a very different strain: 4. "For out of much affliction (*θλιψις*) and anguish (or oppression, *ενωχας*) of heart I wrote unto you with many tears;" but he did not mean to put them to unnecessary pain by that letter; but rather to convince them of his *overflowing affection*, which superseded every other feeling, and obliged him, at the risk of incurring their displeasure, to aim at their real good—he wrote it, "not that they might be grieved, but (says he) that ye may know the love which I have more abundantly (*περισσους*) towards you." They were well aware how painful a task it must be to reprove the object of one's affection; but "better are the

wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy." It is with extreme reluctance that the fond parent corrects his offending child; yet he must do it, if he really loves him, "for what son is he whom his father chasteneth not?" So the most tender physician must sometimes put his patient to pain, in order to save his life. In the present case, the offender had indeed grieved the Apostle; but *he* was not the only sufferer, for the sincere part of the church shared his sorrow, and were equally concerned for the honour of the Gospel. This he said, that they might not think he supposed them *all* inclined to shield the delinquent, or to justify his conduct. This would have been laying a heavy burden on the faithful members. Such seems to be the meaning of the 5th verse. "But if any one (τις) have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part (αλλ' απο μέρους), that I may not burden (πίσυνω) you all." They had not *all* grieved him, but only *that part* which had been puffed up, in the neglect of discipline.

The unhappy person, who had been the cause of so much trouble, had been solemnly excluded, by a public act of the brethren, from the communion of the church, and this censure awarded by the *whole body*, or at least by the majority, had been attended with the most salutary effects. It had produced the most serious concern in his mind. It had roused him from his previous state of carnality and sloth, and had filled him with the most painful apprehensions respecting the safety of his soul. Now, this was just the result which the Apostle wished to be brought about, and he would not have the church to continue the censure a moment longer than was necessary. 6. "Sufficient (ικανον) for such an one (τοιούτω) is this punishment (τιτιμιαι), which (was inflicted) by the many (υπο των πλειονων)." As Paul had been the first to demand his *exclusion*, (1 Epis. v. 13,) he would now be the first to beg their forgiveness of him, and to recommend his *restoration*. For so great was the distress of mind experienced by that individual, that he was ready to sink into despair, and might, if not speedily restored, be in danger of being consumed with *excessive grief*: 7. "So that on the contrary (τουναντιον) *ye* ought rather to forgive him (χαρισασθαι), and to comfort him (παρηκαλεσθαι), lest such an one should be swallowed up with immoderate sorrow (περισσότερα λυπη)." This expression shews how solemn an act excommunication then was, and how great a loss even a *temporary* suspension from the fellowship of the church was esteem-

ed. The Apostle therefore entreated them to give him a public testimony of their forgiveness, by receiving him again into their communion. Thus they would convince him that they had been actuated, not by resentment or hatred towards his person, but by affection for his soul. 8. "Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm (or publicly ratify, *κυρώσαι*) your love to him." He had enjoined his exclusion, as a test of their submission to his apostolic authority, and now he would recommend his restoration for the same reason. Thus, in all respects, they would prove their fidelity to the Saviour. 9. "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, (*δοκιμασθῆναι*, "that I might have experience of you," *Doddridge*), whether ye be obedient in all things." In doing this, he had such confidence in their prudence and discretion, that he was prepared, not only in this, but in other like cases, to confirm their sentence by his own suffrage. He had already, in his own mind, freely *forgiven* the offender; and in doing so, he had acted not merely from personal regard to *him*, but especially for the good of the church, which he saw would be promoted by an equitable decision. This he did as the presence and by the authority of Christ. 10, 11. "To whom ye forgive any thing, I (forgive) also. For if I have forgiven (*αφῆκα*) any thing, to whom I forgave, (I did so) on your account (*δι' ὑμᾶς*), in the person (*ἢ προσώπῳ*) of Christ."

The Apostle was the more inclined to recommend lenient measures, on account of the advantage which the enemy of souls might gain over them, by their pushing the exercise of discipline too far. For he had often had occasion to observe the subtle contrivances of this great adversary to bring discredit on the Gospel, by means of the imprudent conduct of professing christians; neither could the Corinthians be *ignorant* of the many stratagems which he employs to beguile unstable souls. He forgave the offender, "lest (says he) we be overreached (*πλεονεκτηθῶμεν*) by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his devices (*ἔργα*)."

By encouraging the toleration of disorders in the church, he brings religion into contempt; from the exercise of unnecessary severity, he takes occasion to represent christians as of a harsh and unrelenting temper; he drives the offender to despair, or tempts him to apostatize; he hinders the success of the Gospel, and discourages those who may afterwards be overtaken in a fault. Thus, the apostle Peter exhorts christians to watchfulness and sobriety;

"for," (says he) your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour," (1 Epis. v. 8.) And, in the same manner, Paul exhorts Timothy, in meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves, "that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his will," (2 Epis. ii. 25, 26.) It is well observed by Dr M'Knight, that the Apostle seems here to condemn the principle, afterwards acted upon by the Novatians, who would not admit to their communion those who had apostatized in times of persecution, however penitent they might be. A practice utterly at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, and which was productive of very unhappy consequences. (*See Mosheim's Church History*, cent. 3. part. 2. c. 5. § 17.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. We have already had occasion to observe (on 1st Epis. chap. v.) that the power of receiving and excluding members is lodged in the whole body of the faithful, and not merely in the officers of the church. The Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to forgive and restore the offender; he does not admit him by his own authority. The exercise of discipline, when duly administered according to the laws of Christ, is productive of the happiest effects. By this means, the church is admonished and instructed—the honour of the Gospel is vindicated, and the offender is either brought to repentance, or left without excuse. In inflicting censures, we must imitate the meekness and gentleness of Christ; we must beware of the indulgence of unhallowed passion, and as soon as we discover signs of repentance and reformation, we must again admit the offender to our confidence and love. "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." But it is reasonable to require in the offending person, unequivocal marks of sorrow, followed by corresponding fruits, as the proper ground of readmission to church privileges. Where the heart is unhumiliated, and the life unchanged, the censure inflicted has not produced its proper effect. Alas! that the discipline of the church should be so little regarded, that instead of occasioning *immoderate grief*, it more frequently excites the offender to throw out injurious reflections on his brethren, and serves to harden him in his sin.

2. We may observe the great tenderness of the Apostle's spirit. He often alludes to the tears which he shed, both in writing to the churches, and in his personal addresses, Acts xx. 19, 31. Philip. iii. 18. How painful was it to him to administer reproof, and with how much delicacy does he allude to the case of the Corinthian offender, without expressly noticing either his name or his crime! So deeply had he drunk into the spirit of his Master.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—17.

PAUL'S FIDELITY AND SUCCESS IN PREACHING.

THE Apostle, after leaving Ephesus in consequence of the tumult raised by Demetrius, visited Troas in the prosecution of his ministry. This sea-port town is frequently mentioned in the history of the Acts, as one of the scenes of his labours, and it is not certainly known to what occasion he here refers. It seems probable, however, that it is the same to which allusion is made Acts xx. 1, 2., where the Apostle is represented as visiting Macedonia, when he perhaps made some stay at Troas. *There* the preaching of the Gospel was attended with great success. Many were induced to hear the word, and, by divine grace, their hearts were opened to receive the truth as it is in Jesus; but one disappointment darkened all the prospect. 12, 13. "Now, when I came to Troas to preach the Gospel of Christ (*εις το ευαγγελιον*, in or with the Gospel), and a door was opened to me by (*υπ*) the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but bidding them farewell (*αποταξамνος*), I departed (*εξηλθον*) into Macedonia." Thus, though every thing at Troas seemed to invite the Apostle to prolong his stay, his mind became very uneasy on account of the absence of his beloved associate, whom he had appointed to meet him there, and to report what effect his first letter had produced on the Corinthian church; he was led to fear, that they had refused to submit to the direction of Titus, and had treated his Epistle with neglect. Therefore he reluctantly abandoned the sphere of usefulness which Providence had opened

to him, and proceeded to Macedonia, there expecting to hear tidings of his friend. To his great joy, he met with him in that country, and received the very agreeable intelligence, that the Corinthians had shewn every disposition to comply with his injunctions. This we learn from chapter vii. 5, 6., where he describes the pleasure he felt in hearing the report of Titus. The whole of the intermediate passage may be viewed as a *digression*, wherein the Apostle sets forth the excellence and glory of the Gospel, and unfolds the sources of his joy amidst the various trials he encountered.

The good accounts that were brought to him respecting the state of the Corinthian church, excited feelings of the liveliest gratitude in his mind, to which he gives utterance in the language of holy exultation. 14. "Now, thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph (*θεραπεύοντι ἡμᾶς*), in (or by) Christ (*ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*), and maketh manifest by us the savour (*ὁσμήν*) of the knowledge of himself (*τῆς γνῶσεως αὐτοῦ*), in every place." There is here an allusion to the public triumphs which were granted by the Roman people to their generals, after some signal victory. The victor rode, in a splendid car, through the streets of the city to the capitol, where the trophies were deposited, and thanks were offered to the gods. The chief prisoners were led in chains before him; he was attended by his relations and officers, and some of his friends usually sat in the chariot with him. According to M'Knight, this last idea is included in the expression *θεραπεύοντι ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*, who renders it "causeth us to triumph *with* Christ;" as if our Saviour were represented as the principal personage in the procession, attended by his apostles and ministers. But perhaps the Apostle only means that his victory was of a spiritual nature, and was owing to the assistance of his Lord. In the triumphal processions, the ground was strewed with flowers, and the air perfumed with incense. Some of the captives were set at liberty, while others were put to death in honour of the conqueror. In the same manner, the Apostle compares himself to a victorious general, riding in triumph over the powers of darkness, notwithstanding the opposition and discouragements he met with; and he ascribes his success to God, who had clothed his word with power. The Gospel, as revealing the *odoriferous knowledge* of Christ, he compares to the flowers and incense, which diffused a

fragrant smell. To the captives who were *preserved*, this perfume was most exhilarating. To those who were doomed to death, it only foreboded their approaching fate, and heightened their misery. So the apostles, by diffusing the knowledge of Christ, were *most acceptable to God*, as the incense of the daily sacrifice; and their labours would be duly appreciated by him, whatever reception they met with in the world. But the *consequences* of their ministry were very different among the various classes of hearers. 15, 16. "For we are unto God a sweet savour (*ὡσμὴ*) of Christ, among (*ἐν*) them that are saved, and among them that perish, (*ἀπολλυμένοις*, them that are lost or destroyed.) To the one (*εἰς μὲν*) we are a savour of death unto death, (ending in death, *McKnight*), and to the others a savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient (or fit, *ἱκανός*) for these things?" Those who believed the message of the apostles were *saved* from hell and sin, and their souls were refreshed and exhilarated by its precious discoveries. It was to such "the savour of life" that should never end; while those who rejected it, sealed their own condemnation, greatly enhanced their guilt, and *perished* in their sins. To these it was the savour of death unto death; just as the finest perfumes, which regale the senses when in a sound state, are offensive, and even injurious, to the sick and diseased. Thus the inestimable blessing of the Gospel, will prove to many the *occasion* of greater loss; for in proportion as our privileges are enlarged, our responsibility increases. On this principle, our Saviour declares that it shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those cities wherein his mighty works were done, and his message rejected, (Matt. xi. 20—24.) It would have been better for such persons that they had never heard the voice of mercy. But the perfections of God will be glorified in them that perish, as well as in those who are saved. The *latter* will display his mercy, love and power: The *former*, his holiness, justice, and truth, (Rom. ix. 22.) Even the destruction of these will not tarnish the lustre of divine mercy; for not till her invitations are refused, are they given into the hands of justice. Such being the momentous consequences attending the preaching of the Gospel, the Apostle might well exclaim, "who is sufficient for these things?" The responsibility of those who *hear* it, is very great. Their eternal happiness or misery depends on the re-

ception which they give to it. But those who are called to the office of the ministry, are particularly concerned in this question. They are entrusted with a message which must prove either a blessing or a curse. How anxious should they be to be found diligent and faithful! How great the honour conferred upon them, of making known the savour of the knowledge of Christ! How should their hearts expand with gratitude and joy, when their message is found to be the savour of life unto life; and how deeply should they be affected with the perishing condition of those who reject the counsel of God against themselves! What purity of doctrine, holiness of life, and earnestness of address should distinguish their ministry! How should they tremble at the thought of rashly taking on themselves this momentous trust; and how great the presumption of those, who, instead of aiming at the glory of God and the salvation of souls, seek only the applause of men, or the advancement of their own ease, influence or wealth! How aggravated the guilt of those who do the work of the Lord negligently or deceitfully! If even an inspired Apostle, so eminently gifted, and so extensively useful as Paul, felt his own insufficiency, how much more should the ordinary preachers of the word acknowledge their unfitness, and implore the influences of the Holy Spirit, which alone can render their labours effectual! Indeed, were it not for the promise of divine grace, what serious mind would not shrink from the undertaking? But if ministers are faithful to their trust, whatever reception their message shall meet with, they shall be approved of God, and shall in no wise lose their reward. He *always* causeth them to triumph, and they are to him a sweet savour of Christ, in them that perish, as well as in those that are saved.

Since so much depends on the faithful exhibition of the Gospel, it behoves those who preach it, to administer the *pure* word of truth; for this alone can enlighten, sanctify, and save. Such was the doctrine taught by the Apostle and his fellow-labourers. 17. "For we are not like many, who adulterate (*καταλλυομεν*, part.) the word of God, but as of sincerity, (*ἐξ ειλικρινας*) but as of (or from, *ἐξ*) God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." Many persons, even in the apostolic times, corrupted the Gospel, like vintners who adulterate their wines, in order to enhance their profits. So the word *καταλλυομεν* signifies. The Apostle may

here allude to the judaizing teachers, who enjoined the observance of the ceremonial law as necessary to salvation, or to those who obscured the simplicity of divine truth, by philosophical speculations. He may also include those who taught the doctrine of justification by works, and those who turned the grace of God into licentiousness. These various classes neutralized the design, and destroyed the efficacy, of the Gospel. The pure wine of the kingdom, was mixed up by them with deleterious ingredients, so that its rich flavour and nutritious qualities were almost lost. This was particularly the case with the factious leaders in the church at Corinth, who perverted the doctrines of Christianity, so as to gratify the pride, self-righteousness, or sensuality of their hearers, and, by this means, aimed at promoting their own influence and emolument. This shews how early and rapid the progress of error was; and the language is applicable to any unscriptural doctrine. There are still many who adulterate the word of God. They may not indeed openly or directly impugn the doctrines of grace, but they are so obscured by philosophical refinements, self-righteous schemes, or superstitious ceremonies, that the souls of the people are poisoned by the unhallowed mixture. Paul and his companions renounced these hidden things of dishonesty. They spoke *from the sincerity* of their heart, as men who were deeply impressed with a sense of the truth and importance of what they taught; they appeared before men as ambassadors *from God*, and as accountable to him for the faithful execution of their office, they conducted themselves as under his all-seeing eye, in making known the truth *in Christ*, and they looked for acceptance in their work through Him, whose glorious undertaking formed the grand theme of their ministry.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Blessed be God, who granted such signal triumphs to the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ; that the savour of his knowledge has been diffused through our distant land! May the name of Christ be to us as ointment poured forth, and may we never cease to pray that encreasing success may attend the administration of the Gospel in every place!

2. Let those who fill the office of the ministry be encouraged to go forward in the strength of divine grace. The word shall

not return unto God void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he has sent it. Only let us beware of adulterating that word, and let us speak as dying men to dying men; as in the sight of God, and under a deep impression of our unfitness and unworthiness.

CHAPTER THIRD.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—6.

PAUL'S MINISTRY ATTESTED BY THE CONVERSION OF THE CORINTHIANS.

THE primitive churches were united, as one great family, by the common bond of Christianity. Hence the teachers and members of one church were readily admitted to the communion of others. But as it was necessary to guard against imposition, it was customary to send a *letter of introduction* by any one going to a distant place, recommending him, as a brother, to the fellowship of the church there. Instances of this we have, Acts xviii. 27., where we are told, that when Apollos was disposed to go into Achaia, "the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him;" and, Rom. xvi. 1, 2., where the Apostle says, "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea, that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints," &c. Such letters the false teachers at Corinth seem to have procured, perhaps from the church at Jerusalem, and it is thought they insinuated that Paul had never produced any certificate of this nature. With great animation therefore,

and in a style of keen irony, he asks, 1. "Do we begin (*αρχομεθα*) again to commend ourselves? or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you, or of commendation from you?" Dr M'Knight translates the word *αρχομεθα*, "must we begin," and this sense agrees well with the clause immediately following; but there is not sufficient authority for so rendering a verb in the indicative mood. But the Apostle evidently anticipates an objection that might be started by the factious party, in consequence of what he had just said respecting his triumphing in Christ, and his faithful preaching of the word of God, (chap. ii. 14—17.) They might be ready to ask, was he *resuming* the ungracious task of recommending himself? had he not said enough on this subject in his former epistle, (chap. ix.) and would it not have been more to the purpose to have brought letters of introduction with him from some well accredited persons, as the factious teachers had done? Now, he demands of these objectors, if such testimonials were in his case at all *necessary*; did he require to bring commendatory letters *to them*, as if he had been a mere stranger, or was it necessary that he should obtain *from them* an attestation of his ministry, when about to visit any other church? What is usually called *self-commendation* is forbidden in another part of this epistle, (chap. x. 18.) but by recommending himself, the Apostle here means certifying his call to the ministry. Such credentials might indeed be of importance to *some* teachers, who had no other way of establishing their authority, but the Apostle possessed a testimonial of a far higher nature, in the success of his labours at Corinth. 2. "Ye are our epistle, written (*εγγραμμενην*) in our hearts, known and read by all men." He could appeal to the believing Corinthians *themselves*, as *his* recommendatory letter; bearing the superscription and seal of divine truth. *This* he valued so highly, that it might be said to be engraven in *his* heart. Some copies read, *εν ταις καρδιαις υμων*, "in *your* hearts," agreeably to the sentiment afterwards expressed, ver. 3. The truths of the Gospel were inscribed on the heart of the Corinthians, and its effects were visible in their whole deportment. Dr M'Knight retains the present reading, and observes, that the Apostle meant to say, that the change produced on the character of these christians, was a transcript or *copy* of the original letter engraven on the heart of Paul, in his conversion and call to the ministry, and thus he thinks all confusion of metaphor is avoided.

The change wrought on these converts was most *evident* to every observer: this kind of letter the most careless and illiterate could read. It plainly demonstrated the divine origin and holy tendency of that doctrine which Paul had preached, and by means of which they had been brought from the idolatry and pollution of paganism into the glorious light of the Gospel. It is said by some, that the Apostle refers to the miraculous gifts conferred by him, which established his authority wherever he went, and that the conversion of the Corinthians could be known only to a few. But does not our Lord command us to let our light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father in heaven? and was not the conversion of these proud and licentious idolaters, as palpable a testimony to the world, of the truth of Christianity, as the exercise of miraculous gifts? The letter now referred to, infinitely surpassed any that could be written by man; nay, it was superior to those illustrious tablets of stone, on which the moral law was inscribed, when delivered to Moses? 3. "Ye are manifested (*φανερωμεθα*) to be the epistle of Christ, ministered (*διακονησμεθα*) by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart." This letter was, as it were, dictated by the Saviour himself; it was penned by the ministry of the Apostle, its characters were traced by the influence of the divine Spirit, and it was inscribed on the tablet of a renewed and sanctified heart. The tables of stone were merely passive matter; the heart of man, being the seat of the understanding and affections, is a monument of a more durable and illustrious kind. Thus the christians exhibited, not only in their outward conduct, but in the dispositions and frame of their mind, a fair transcript of that heavenly doctrine which was now revealed to the holy apostles by the Spirit. This is agreeable to the language of ancient prophecy, Jer xxxi. 33., where God promises to put his law in the inward parts of the spiritual Israel, and to write it in their heart. In the same manner, the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in the name of the Lord, says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," &c. There seems to be an elegant allusion to the language of this last prediction, in the expression, "fleshy tables of

the heart;" and both passages shew the necessity of divine influence to prepare the mind for the cordial reception of divine truth. This then was the ground of the Apostle's confidence before God, and to this he could appeal in refutation of the calumnious reports that were circulated against him, in humble dependence on the grace of the Lord Jesus. 4. "And this persuasion (*ταυτην πεποιθησιν*) we have through Christ, towards (*προς*, with) God." In saying this, he did not mean to arrogate any merit to himself, in the conversion of sinners, or to assert that he was able, by his own reasoning, to effect so great a work. So far from this, he was sensible that he could not, without divine grace, think even a good thought. He could not, however, be insensible of the change which had taken place in his own character, or of the good which he had been the instrument of effecting in the world. He was fitted and prepared for his Master's use; but he devoutly ascribes all his sufficiency and success to the mighty power of God, which wrought effectually in him. 5. "Not that we are fit (*ικανοι*) of ourselves, to think (or reason, *λογισασθαι*) any thing as of (*αφ*, from) ourselves, but our fitness (*ικανότης*) is from God."

The mention of the tables of stone, naturally led the Apostle to refer to the nature and design of the former dispensation, or old covenant, of which the moral law, written with the finger of God, was the grand basis; and to unfold the superior glory and excellence of the new covenant, or christian economy, as in the remaining part of this chapter. The latter of these embraces all heavenly and spiritual blessings, and is ratified by the blood of Christ. Now, of this covenant the Apostle and his fellow-labourers, were ministers, appointed by the Lord, and fitted (*ικανωσι*) by the gifts of the Spirit, to publish and recommend it to the world: 6. "He hath made us able ministers of the new covenant, (*διαθηκης*) not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth (or giveth life, *ζωοποιει*)." The truths relating to this gracious covenant of mercy, formed the great subject of their preaching; and their ministry was distinguished by prudence, faithfulness, diligence, and success. God himself confirmed their testimony by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that the excellence of the power appeared to be of Him. In this respect they differed from those teachers who adhered to the Mosaic law, and to the doctrine of justification by works. These were ministers of the letter (*γραμματις*); they enjoined a

literal conformity to the ceremonial institutions, and inculcated obedience to the moral law as a *covenant of works*; and they entirely lost sight of the design of both, to point out the necessity of an atonement, and to lead the sinner to Christ. The apostles, on the other hand, were ministers of the *Spirit* (*πνεύματος*). Not only did they unfold the *spiritual meaning* of the legal types and shadows, but they directed men to the Saviour, as the end of the law for righteousness to every believer, and made known that Gospel by which the Spirit is conferred, and light and holiness are imparted to the mind. The *literal* observance of the ceremonial rites of the Mosaic law, and an adherence to the moral law as the condition of justification, left men under the curse and condemnation of both. Thus the letter *killeth*, by destroying all hope of acceptance; for never, *in this way*, can pardon and eternal life be obtained: Whereas, it is the design of the Gospel to shew in what manner the soul is *quickened* to spiritual life, by faith in Christ, and the effectual working of the Holy Spirit: "He that believeth on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life." The words *letter* and *spirit* have been explained by some, as descriptive of the *literal* and *symbolical* meaning of Scripture, but such an interpretation is inconsistent with the Apostle's design, as will afterwards more fully appear. The practice of spiritualizing every part of the sacred volume, has exposed it to unmerited contempt, and has materially injured the cause of truth. Some, again, conceive that the word *letter* refers to the Mosaic dispensation *as such*, and that the Gospel preached is the quickening spirit. But to Old Testament believers, who exercised faith in the promised seed, the law was not a killing letter, and the Gospel is nothing more to those who reject it, or who build upon it a system of self-righteousness. It must be accompanied with divine influence to render it productive of spiritual life. Yet we must not so explain the figure, as if the written word were a mere lifeless letter, without any power to convince or persuade; "For the word of God is quick (*ζωον*, living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," (Heb. iv. 12.) The truth is, the law performed the office of a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. After *his* death its authority ceased, and those who still adhered to it, endangered their own salvation.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The self-denied, laborious, and faithful servant of Christ will never be wholly destitute of proofs that the Lord has called him to labour in his vineyard. He will be able to appeal to one and another, who have been converted by his ministry, as living epistles of recommendation, attesting the purity of his doctrine and the holiness of his life. These are more satisfactory than the most ample testimony from men. Do we wish to become able ministers of the new covenant? Let us pray for clear and comprehensive views of the Gospel of Christ.—Let us diligently study the sacred Scriptures, and let us never forget that all our sufficiency is from God.

2. What characters do we exhibit as professing christians? Is it manifest that we are the epistles of Christ? Do we display the holy tendency of the Gospel we hear, by the consistency, purity, and benevolence of our lives? Are the peculiar characters of Christianity drawn on our hearts by the Spirit of the living God? Do all men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus? Alas! what signify the most correct views, and the most punctual observance of religious duties? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

SECTION SECOND.—VERSSES 7—18.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

THE Apostle had compared the believing Corinthians to a commendatory letter from the Saviour, exhibiting the true nature of the Gospel, and attesting the faithfulness and success of Paul's ministry. He had also alluded to that divine influence by which he was fitted to be a minister of the new covenant; He now contrasts the Gospel dispensation with the Mosaic economy; 7, 8. “But if the ministration (or ministry, *diakonia*) of death, en-

graven with letters in stones (ἐν γραμμασί τετυπωμένη ἐν λίθοις), was glorious (ἐγένεθη ἰδοξία, was done with glory, *M' Knight*), so that the children of Israel were not able stedfastly to behold (αὐτίνεσθαι) the face of Moses, on account of the glory of his countenance, which (glory) was to be abolished (καταργουμένη), how shall not the ministry of the Spirit be rather glorious?" Many professed Christians, especially the judaizing teachers, were disposed to *glory* in the Mosaic law, and wished to render its obligation perpetual, and to bring the Gentile converts under its yoke. Now the Apostle did not mean to depreciate this law, but to shew its subservience to the Gospel. In the first place, it was the ministration of *death*. The moral law, by its spirituality and purity, proved that all mankind were under sin, and left no hope of pardon to those, who, by transgression, were under its curse; and the ceremonial law contained such severe penalties, and enjoined such a multiplicity of duties, that it rather testified the infinite holiness of God, and proved the defiling nature of sin, than afforded any expectation of deliverance from the wrath to come. After our Saviour's advent, it was no longer binding on the conscience, and sealed the condemnation of those who adhered to its lifeless forms, and despised the great atonement. Yet the Apostle was willing to allow that in some respects it was *glorious*. It was promulgated with terrible displays of the Divine Majesty, when Jehovah descended on Mount Sinai with ten thousands of his holy angels, when a thick cloud enveloped the sacred mount, from which issued thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled, (Exod. xix. 16.) The moral law of the ten commandments was "engraven or printed on stones, with letters," by the finger of God—the whole system shadowed forth, in striking similitudes, those *good things* which were afterwards to be revealed, and the brightness of the divine presence was such as to reflect a dazzling *lustre* on the countenance of Moses, when he came down from the holy mount. An account of this we have in Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai, with the two tables of testimony in his hand, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him: And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him." This was a glorious proof of the divine commission

of the Jewish lawgiver, and intimated the comparative excellence of the former dispensation. Here there could be no room for collusion; and as opaque bodies reflect the lustre of those which are luminous; so it was evidently proved that Moses had come from the presence of Him, who "is clothed with *light* as with a garment." But this supernatural lustre was but *temporary*: According to some, it gradually wore off within a limited period: Others suppose it continued to illuminate the countenance of Moses till his death. At all events, it was *to be abolished*, as an intimation of the transient nature of that economy. How superior, then, is the *glory of the Gospel*, the *ministry of the Spirit*! "It began to be spoken by the Lord himself, and was confirmed to men by those who heard him, God also bearing witness with signs and wonders and diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will," (Heb. ii. 3, 4.) The divine Spirit descended from heaven, on the heads of the Apostles, like cloven tongues of fire, and sat upon each of them. Thus qualified they were enabled to declare to every man, in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God, (Acts ii. 3, 4.) And not only were they endowed with these extraordinary gifts in their own persons, but they were empowered to confer them on others, by the laying on of hands—the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the law and the prophets—the Gospel reveals the office of the Holy Spirit as the teacher, sanctifier, and comforter of the saints, by whom they are convinced of sin, led to the Saviour for pardon, and strengthened to keep the commandments of God: It brings life and immortality more clearly to light, and directs our view to Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. Our attention is now directed to another point of contrast: 9. "For if the ministry of condemnation (*κατακρισεως*), was glorious (*δοξα*), much more does the ministry of righteousness excel (*πλεονεκει*) in glory." The whole system of the Mosaic law supposes the sinfulness and depravity of human nature. Its design was, "that sin by the commandment might appear exceeding sinful," (Rom. vii. 13.) It points out the rule of duty, but gives no assistance for its performance. It makes no allowance for human weakness, and accepts of no compromise, in default of perfect obedience. It reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and extends its authority over our secret motives. It denounces a curse on all who continue not in all things written in the book of the law

to do them. Consequently, the minds of those who were ignorant of its proper use and design, were kept in a state of perpetual bondage. It could not, by the mere repetition of sacrifices, purify the conscience, (Heb. x. 1, 2.) On the other hand, the Gospel is the ministry of *righteousness*. It reveals God's method of justification by faith, (Rom. i. 16, 17.); it declares his righteousness in the remission of sins, and shews in what way He is at once just and the justifier of the ungodly; it exhibits the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus, as the ground of acceptance to every one who believeth; and it provides for the moral *renovation* of the soul in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. In this view, it far excels, in glory, the ministry of condemnation. It unfolds the divine character in a more interesting and engaging light, and ought to be more highly prized by guilty men.

In itself, the Mosaic law was truly *honourable*. It afforded a bright display of the holiness, justice, and truth of God, and bore evident marks of its heavenly origin. It might be compared to the stars in the firmament, which proclaim the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great Creator. But the Gospel is like the rising sun, which obscures and hides those lesser lights by its superior brightness. It presents a far more clear and comprehensive view of the way of salvation. The legal types and shadows emitted a faint and glimmering twilight, which is lost in the blaze of the meridian day. 10. "For indeed that which was glorified (*διδόξαμινον*) was not made glorious (*διδόξασις*) in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth (*ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης*)." The words, *in this respect* (*ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει*), are applied by some to the *illumination* of Moses' face, but they rather express the circumstance which obscured the glory of the old covenant, namely, the *superior glory* of the Gospel. The former, though undoubtedly illustrious, in respect of the mode of its promulgation, has no glory *comparatively*, in respect of the excelling glory of the latter.

Again, the Mosaic economy was but a *temporary* arrangement, intended to answer a special purpose, as "the bringer in of a better hope;" it was merely a *shadow* of good things; and now that the *substance* had appeared, it was become old, and ready to vanish away. Even its literal observance would soon become impracticable, by the destruction of the temple, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. But the christian dispensation shall con-

tinue in force till the end of time. It is the last and conclusive discovery of the divine will. Its doctrines and institutions shall never be altered or abolished. 11. "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." The original is, "εἰ γὰρ τὸ καταργούμενον, διὰ δόξης πολλῶν μάλλον τοῦ μένον ἐν δόξῃ." It is thus translated by M'Knight and others, "But if that which is abolished, is abolished by glory, much more that which remaineth, remaineth in glory." But through the whole discourse, the substantive *δόξα*, with or without a preposition, is used as an *adjective*, and it seems unnecessary to vary the sense *here*. The proposed translation renders the Apostle's words harshly elliptical. He had already declared, that the law was deprived of its glory by the superior light of the Gospel, in other words, that it was abolished by glory. Now he introduces another proof of the superiority of the Gospel, namely, its *perpetuity*, as opposed to that which was *done away*. This certainly renders it much more illustrious.

Such being the transcendent glory of the new covenant, of course it required a correspondent method of *teaching*, namely, boldness and simplicity: 12. "Having therefore such a hope" (τοιούτης ἐλπίδας), or persuasion of the superior excellence of the Gospel, "we use great plainness of speech, (πολλὴν παρρησίαν)." In this respect, the preaching of the apostles was very different from the mode of instruction adopted by the heathen philosophers, or even by the Jewish scribes. The *former* affected a technical phraseology, and a style of lofty argumentation, unintelligible to the common people. The *latter* obscured the simplicity of the sacred oracles, by their artificial glosses, and absurd traditions. Nor was it possible, under the Old Testament, to arrive at sufficient perspicuity and exactness, in explaining the way of salvation by a mediator, owing to the comparative obscurity of the types, and the figurative language of prophecy. This might be illustrated by the circumstance of Moses covering his face with a vail, when he spoke to the people, as in Exod. xxxiv. 33. "And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face." While this removed the dazzling lustre, it also *concealed* his countenance, and was an emblem of the comparative obscurity of that system. In this respect the *plain speaking* of the apostles of Christ formed a striking contrast to the figurative representations of the Jewish lawgiver: 13. "And not as Moses (who)

put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end (τελος) of that which is abolished: "they were unable to penetrate the thick vail of types and shadows, so as to behold the glory of that Saviour, who was the great end or scope of that temporary arrangement.* This vail was likewise an emblem of the blindness or callousness of their understandings, (σηματα) through the influence of pride, prejudice and carnality. In fact, there was not only a vail on the law of Moses, but there was a thicker vail on their hearts. Thus the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures was concealed from them, as was remarkably evident in the then existing state of the Jews: 14. "For their minds were blinded or hardened (επαχυνθη), for until this day the same vail remains in the reading of the Old Testament (or covenant, διαθηκη), not taken away (μη ανακαλυπτομενον), which (οτι, vail) is done away in Christ." The writings of Moses are here called the *Old Testament*, as containing a full account of the former dispensation; and this title has been ever since appropriated to the whole of the Jewish Scriptures. These sacred books were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day; but they entirely misunderstood their true meaning: as our Saviour observes, John v. 46. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." They believed his prophetic character, but they did not understand his words in the proper sense. The same sentiment is found in Acts xiii. 27. Now, this vail "is abolished in Christ," it is set aside by the Gospel, which illustrates and fulfils these sacred writings, which clearly reveals the way of salvation, and removes the obduracy of the human heart. Some read the word οτι as one word, and translate the last clause in this manner, "It not being revealed that this vail is abolished by Christ." But although the Gospel was first proclaimed to the Jews, and they enjoyed peculiar advantages for ascertaining the connection between it and the law, they continued till now to reject that glorious Deliverer of whom Moses and the prophets did write. 15. "But to this day,

* The last clause is thus paraphrased by M. Knight, "That the children of Israel might not stedfastly look to the vanishing of the glory on his face," as if he designed thus to conceal the future abrogation of the law; but we cannot think that Moses wished the Israelites to remain ignorant of the removal of the supernatural brightness from his countenance:

when Moses is read, the vail lies (*κείται*) upon their hearts." The writings of that illustrious prophet were to them like a letter in cyphers, of which they had lost the key. This description is still applicable to the Jewish people. The blindness, however, is not incurable. As, when Moses entered into the tabernacle, he removed the vail, till he came from the presence of God (Exod. xxxiv. 34.), so when the *veiled heart* of Israel shall turn to the Lord Jesus, as their anointed king, they shall then clearly perceive the direct reference which these scriptures contain to his person, character, and work. The harmony and connection of the two covenants will plainly appear, and the truth and glory of the Gospel will be evident to their minds. 16. "But when it (the veiled heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away (*ἀρῶμεθα*)." Thus our views are led forward to the conversion of Israel in the latter day, a theme on which the Apostle loved to dwell, and to which he refers more at large in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, verses 25, 26. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come forth of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

The Lord Jesus, as he was the *scope* of the old dispensation, so he is the *spirit* of the new. 17. "Now the Lord is that spirit." He gives efficacy to his word and ordinances, and by his sacred energy pervades and quickens the church. Through him descend the influences of the Holy Spirit, as showers of rain on the parched ground: Without his gracious presence, our souls would lose all relish for spiritual enjoyments, and the institutions of religion would degenerate into lifeless forms; "but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (*ἐλευθερία*)." So in writing to the Romans, he observes, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," (chap. viii. 15.) And again, 2 Tim. i. 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." By the Spirit of God, believers are set free from the condemnation of the law—from the yoke of ceremonial observances—from the love and dominion of sin—from the fear of man, and from the love of this

world—they run in the way of God's commandments with enlargement of heart—they have *freedom* of access into the holiest of all, through the blood of Jesus, and they enjoy communion with God, as his adopted children. Some interpret this of the *freedom* with which the apostles explained the new covenant, by the inspiration of the Spirit; but though this may be included, it does not seem to reach the full meaning of the expression, which describes the privilege of the sons of God. This privilege is further unfolded in the 18th verse: "But we all, with unveiled face, (*ἀνακαλυμμένην προσῶπῳ*) beholding as in a mirror (*κατοπτρίζομενοι*) the glory of the Lord, are transformed (*μεταμορφουμένην*) into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit (*ἀπο Κυρίου πνεύματος*)." This verse is thus paraphrased by M'Knight: "For we apostles all with an unveiled face, brightly reflecting as mirrors, the glory of the Lord Christ, which shines on us, are, in the business of enlightening the world, transformed into the very image of Christ the Sun of Righteousness, by a succession of glory coming on our faces as from the Lord of the covenant of the Spirit." According to this view, the Apostle compares himself, and his fellow-labourers, to the Lord Jesus, as "the light of the world," in consequence of the spiritual knowledge which they diffused by their preaching. But this comes far short of the spirit and energy of the original. The natural meaning of the verb *κατοπτρίζομαι* is certainly *to look into a mirror*, and the expression "we are changed into the same image," must refer to a moral transformation produced by contemplating the object in question. The Apostle is speaking of the *common privilege* of believers under the Gospel, as contrasted with the obscure views of the plan of redemption, held by the Old Testament church. The object of contemplation is "the glory of God" in the face of Jesus Christ. The Gospel exhibits the harmonious and bright display of all the divine perfections in the salvation of sinners; this object they behold, not through the obscure medium of types or prophecies, but *with unveiled face*, in the clear declarations of the Gospel; they see it, as if looking into a highly polished mirror, which exhibits an exact reflection of the object: and this view of the divine glory has a *transforming influence*; by frequent contemplation of that which we admire, we are excited to imitation; so here "we are changed into the same image," by

the renewing of our minds after the divine likeness. Thus the light of the sun is reflected on dark bodies ; and thus did the brightness of the Shekinah illuminate the face of Moses. This transformation is *gradual* and *progressive*, believers are changed "from glory to glory," that is, from one degree of glory to another ; they go from strength to strength ; and as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. They make sensible advances in the knowledge of divine truth, in love to the Saviour, in crucifixion to the world, and in meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Thus "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day," (Prov. iv. 18.) Finally, this moral renovation is ascribed to the Holy Ghost ; we are changed "as by the Spirit of the Lord." The original more properly signifies, "the Lord the Spirit," (Κεϋον πνευματος), which affords a striking proof of the personality and deity of this divine agent. M'Knight translates it, "as by the Lord of the Spirit," but this is harsh and unnatural. Our Saviour is no doubt said to send the Holy Spirit ; but this divine person acts in a *voluntary* and *sovereign* manner in the great work of regeneration. He presents to the mind such a clear and interesting view of the divine character, as revealed in the Gospel, that the affections are attracted and secured ; he enlightens the understanding, regulates the will, and purifies the heart. If we give an active sense to the word *κατοπτρίζομεν*, then believers are represented as mirrors *reflecting* the glory of the Lord on those around them. They are "the lights of the world," who shew forth "the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." Some give an *objective* meaning to the words *ανακαταλαμβάνω πρόσωπον*, and render them in *an unveiled face*, that is, in the face or person of Christ, we behold the glory of God without a veil ; and this is no doubt the object of contemplation, whether the veil be considered as removed from the *object*, or from the face of the *spectator*. The Mosaic law afforded but a faint representation of the divine glory in the redemption of sinners, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. In *Him* we behold mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other. Yet the usual reading seems more natural and agreeable to the context. It cannot be proved from the contrast here drawn between the Jewish

and Christian dispensations, that the factious leaders in the Corinthian church were judaizing teachers. We have elsewhere shewn that they were admirers of the Grecian philosophy. But in proving the divine origin of Christianity, it was of importance to shew, not merely its superiority to all systems of human wisdom, but its paramount claims over all previous dispensations.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us often consider the privileges conferred upon us under the New Covenant. "Blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear, what many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear, and were not permitted." "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience of the law received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "For we are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but we are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel," (Heb. xii. 18—24.) Is the veil of unbelief taken from our minds? Have we been set free from the bondage of sin, and introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God? How happy our condition! how bright our prospects! Let us often contemplate the divine glory as displayed in the face of Jesus Christ; let us look into the glass of the apostolic word, where that glory beams forth without a veil; and let us pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit, that we may be gradually transformed into the same image, till we arrive in the heavenly world, when we shall be completely like Him, for we shall see him as he is.

2. Let those who are called to preach the Gospel, reflect on the high vantage ground on which they stand. They enjoy clearer views of the divine character than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. They ought, therefore, to speak *boldly* in the

name of the Lord Jesus, and with great plainness of speech, to direct the attention of men to Him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.

3. Let us pray for the conversion of the Jewish people; it is the Holy Spirit alone who can remove the veil from their hearts, and discover to them the glory of that Saviour, who is now, in their eyes, as a root out of a dry ground.



CHAPTER FOURTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—7.

PAUL'S METHOD OF PREACHING.

THE Apostle had shewn the superior glory and excellence of the christian dispensation, as contrasted with the Mosaic law—he had described it as the ministry of the Spirit, as the ministration of righteousness, as permanent in its duration, and as producing a moral transformation on the character of believers, by the clear and affecting views which it exhibits of the glory of God in Christ. With this excellent ministry the Apostle had been intrusted by divine grace, and it was his desire to be found faithful and diligent in the service of his Lord: 1, 2. "Wherefore, having this ministry, as we have received mercy (*charis*; passive) we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, (or shame, *aischynē*), not walking in craftiness (*εὐσυνεργία*), neither handling the word of God deceitfully (*δολικῶς λαλῶν*), but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The Apostle had obtained mercy

of the Lord Jesus, who had graciously *pitied* him when living in a state of ignorance and unbelief, full of prejudice and opposition towards the Gospel; he had been pleased to select and qualify this "chief of sinners" as a chosen vessel to bear his name to distant nations; and he was therefore animated, by gratitude, admiration and love, to run the race set before him, without allowing himself to *flag* (*μαλακνέω*) or be discouraged by the various trials he met with both in the church and in the world; "he counted not his life dear to him, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God," (Acts xx. 24.) He dreaded the thoughts of doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, or of giving way to a lukewarm and slothful spirit. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, knowing it to be the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. He esteemed it a high honour to be called to this sacred office, and rejoiced in the success which hitherto had crowned his labours.

In this respect, he pursued a very different course from the heathen philosophers and priests. The *former*, it is well known, thought it lawful to deceive the multitude on the subject of religion, for political ends, and encouraged them in the practice of superstitions which *they knew* to be false. The *latter*, instead of instructing the people, kept them in gross ignorance, in order to secure their own influence and secular advantage. They practised the most shameful impositions, in their pretended oracles and auguries; under the garb of sanctity, they frequently concealed very dissolute lives; and in their boasted mysteries, all kinds of excess were indulged. In allusion to *these*, the Apostle observes, (Eph. v. 12.) "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." Nor were the Jewish doctors free from blame. By their corrupt glosses, and unwarrantable traditions, they made void the law of God; they bound heavy burdens on men's shoulders, which they themselves would not touch, and while they were zealous for the lesser matters of the law, they neglected the great duties of justice, mercy, and fidelity. They were like painted sepulchres, which appear beautiful without, but within are full of uncleanness. These uphallowed devices the apostles manfully disdained, and utterly renounced—they "*commanded away*" (*ἐπιτιμάουσιν*) these hidden things of shame—they did not walk in craftiness, by assuming a fair

exterior, to conceal a vicious character, nor did they take away the key of knowledge, or *corrupt the word of God*, by putting a false or forced construction on the sacred oracles, so as to obscure their plain meaning, and establish a favourite doctrine. They made the *truth manifest*, by setting it in the clearest light, and by using the most forcible and affecting arguments to persuade men to embrace the Gospel; they applied the word to the varied characters and circumstances of their hearers; and did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; thus they left them without excuse, and were clear from the blood of all men: they could not plead that the message was obscure, or inapplicable to their case. Whatever reception they might give to the doctrine, they could not deny the sincerity and uprightness of the teachers, who *established themselves in the conscience of every man*, as holy and blameless persons, who conducted themselves *as in the presence of God*, with the utmost seriousness, fidelity, and affection.

The unbelief of men must therefore be mainly ascribed to the state of their heart. 3, 4. "If even our Gospel be hid (or veiled, *κατακρυβηται*), it is veiled to them that are lost (*οις τοις ἀπολλομένοις*), among whom (*οις*) the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (*φωτισμοῦ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ*), who is the image of God, should irradiate (or shine upon) them, (*ἀσφαλῶς αὐτοῖς*)."

The rejection of the Gospel is here traced to its proper cause. It had been proclaimed in the most clear and faithful manner; the divine authority of its first ministers was confirmed by the miracles which they wrought, and by their holy lives and patient sufferings; it bears, internally, evident marks of infinite wisdom and goodness; it is admirably adapted to the moral condition of man; it addresses him on subjects of the utmost importance: if, therefore, it is after all veiled or hid from those who hear it, so that they complain of its mysterious doctrines, and continue blind to its glory and suitableness, it is not owing to any want of fitness in the terms employed to announce it, or to any deficiency of proof, or to any defect in the qualifications of the teachers; it is not to be ascribed to the uninteresting nature of the subject, or to the want of capacity to receive it, or to any deficiency in its promises and invitations, but to the wilful blindness and perversity of the human heart, which refuses to abandon its sinful

courses, its self-righteous hopes, its proud reasonings, and to submit to the humbling and purifying doctrines of the cross. But this circumstance, so far from affording to men any *attenuation* of their guilt in rejecting the Gospel, proves the criminality of unbelief in the most obvious and affecting manner. They will not examine the evidences of Christianity which are placed before them, they will not give that degree of attention to the most important of all subjects which they readily bestow on the arts and sciences, or even on the common occurrences of life. They are not required to believe *without* proof, but they are invited to search the Scriptures whether these things be so. Our Saviour ascribes the unbelief of men to their inattention and vicious habits. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," (John iii. 19—21.)* The condition of such persons is very deplorable: "they are lost;" or, as the same word is elsewhere rendered, they *perish*, (1 Epia. i. 18.) The very fact of their rejecting the only remedy provided for their spiritual maladies, proves them to be in a state of guilt and condemnation, and leaves them justly exposed to all the consequences of sin, to irretrievable and hopeless misery. The expression is sometimes rendered *actively*, "they destroy themselves;" they bring upon their own heads swift destruction—life and death have been set before them, and they have chosen death rather than life. Their unbelief likewise gives the enemy of souls a vast advantage over them. Satan is here called "the god of this world," not as if he were its lawful proprietor or ruler, but as its successful usurper, who has engaged its inhabitants in a rebellion against their righteous King. So he is called by our Saviour "the prince of this world," (John xii. 31.), and in another place, by our apostle, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," (Eph. ii. 2.) The continuance of his power depends on his keeping men in ignorance of their real condition in the sight of God; and as it is the design of the Gospel to point out their sin and danger, and to unfold the glory of Christ as a Saviour, he endeavours, by all means, to prevent the *illumination*

* See two able discourses on this subject by Ralph Wardlaw, D. D. occasioned by Mr Brougham's inaugural address as Rector of the Glasgow university. See also Mr Erskine's Essay on Faith, sect. 2.

(*φωτισμα*) of the Gospel from irradiating their souls. As he cannot overthrow the *authority* of this revelation of mercy, he blinds the understandings of men, by working on their pride, vanity, self-righteousness, sensuality, ambition, and covetousness. Thus they lose sight of this glorious object, and become as insensible to its worth and beauty, as a man destitute of sight is of the splendour of the sun in the firmament. But it is the *unbelief* of men which is the strong-hold of this apostate spirit—he blinds the minds of the *unbelieving*, (*τοις ἀπιστοῖς*). Their unbelief is not represented as the *effect* of Satanic influence, but this subtle enemy takes advantage of their previously existing state of mind. It is among those who *disbelieve* the Gospel, that he exerts his influence with the greatest success, and displays the amazing subtilty of his nature. Nothing can afford a stronger proof of human depravity, than that men should continue secure in ignorance and sin; while the voice of mercy sounds in their ears, and the clear light of the Gospel shines around them. On persons in this situation a spirit of deep slumber is poured, and if mercy prevent not, they shall be given up to judicial blindness and obduracy of heart. The Gospel of Christ is here compared to a glorious and resplendent object, which presents itself to the contemplation of all who will turn their attention towards it; but those who believe not, “refuse to come to the light;” and the god of this world, by interposing some powerful temptation, conceals its glory from their minds. Some translate the words, *Εἰς ἡμᾶς, by whom*, intimating that it is by means of those who are lost, that Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers; and it is true that those who have rejected the Gospel *themselves*, use all their influence to overthrow the faith; and corrupt the heart of others. Were it not for the influence thus employed, the Gospel would appear the most important and attractive of all objects. It imparts light, peace, and joy to the mind, and is therefore inexpressibly *glorious*. It gives light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace, (Luke i. 79.) It exhibits the glory of Christ as the *image of the invisible God*, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express *character* of his person—possessed of all the perfections of deity—the source of life and happiness to men. The same title is given to our Lord, Col. i. 15. and Heb. i. 3.

On account of his divine excellence and dignity, and the ines-

timable benefits derived from him, this glorious Redeemer was the great subject of the apostolic ministry: 5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (*δια Ιησου*)."¹ The first preachers of the Gospel did not court the applause of men, by affecting the arts of human eloquence; they did not make their preaching subservient to the advancement of their own ease, emolument, or influence; they did not amuse their hearers with curious speculations of their own contrivance. It was their anxious care that men should not think more highly of them than they ought; and they spoke with such simplicity and seriousness, that all consideration of the *speaker* was lost, in the deep attention excited to the *subject*. They preached Jesus as *the Christ*, the Son of God, as *the Lord* from heaven; they set forth the infinite glory of his person—the worth and efficacy of his sacrifice—the beauty of his character—the suitableness of his offices, as the prophet, priest, and king of the church—the prevalence of his intercession—the prosperity and peace of his kingdom, and the solemnities of his second coming. They represented Him as the supreme object of trust, reverence and love; and so far were they from seeking to aggrandize themselves, that they were content to be viewed as fellow-servants with their christian brethren, yea, as *servants of the churches for Jesus' sake*. They considered it their duty to make every sacrifice to promote the spiritual interests of their brethren; they were willing to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and to stoop to the meanest offices of love. Like David, they would rather be door-keepers in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of wickedness; and to this they were excited, not more by motives of benevolence, than by a feeling of gratitude and love to the heavenly Saviour.

They had been favoured with an extraordinary measure of divine influence: 6. "For God who commanded (*ἐνετειλεν*) the light to shine (*λαμψει*) out of darkness, he (*ὁ*) hath shined into our hearts (to give) the illumination (*προς φωτισμον*) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (or person, *ἢ προσωπον*) of Jesus Christ." The same Almighty Being, who, amidst the darkness and confusion of chaos, had said, "let there be light and there was light," and who, by a *word*, introduced beauty and order into the universe, had by his Spirit illuminated their hearts, dissipating the thick clouds of ignorance and unbelief, and appointing

them to shine as lights in the world, to impart by their doctrine the lustre of the knowledge of his glory, as displayed in the face of his beloved Son, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The Apostle refers to the words of the inspired historian in Gen. i. 3. giving an account of the creation of natural light, which are pronounced by Longinus a specimen of the true sublime. In a lower degree, all believers are illuminated by the Spirit of God; hence, the Apostle prays, on behalf of the Ephesians, (chap. i. 18.) that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened," &c. He exhorts the believing Hebrews to "call to remembrance the former days, in which they were illuminated," (chap. x. 32.); and Peter exhorts the believing strangers, to shew forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, (1 Epis. ii. 9.) Thus, the true God is contrasted with the prince of this world. The former irradiates the minds of those who believe; the latter blinds the understanding of them who believe not.

The weakness of the instruments employed to propagate this Gospel, demonstrated the divine origin of their doctrine, and proved that they were upheld by an energy superior to their own: 7. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, (οἱ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ὡς ἄργιλον), that the excellence of the power might be of God and not of us." The apostles were taken from the lowest ranks of life; if we except Paul, none of them enjoyed the advantages of a learned education; as Galileans, they were despised by the Jews, and as Jews, they were treated with contempt by the polite Greeks. They were naturally of slow capacity, and were deficient in the graces of oratory; they were everywhere exposed to the violence of the multitude, and had to struggle with poverty and hardships. They had to contend with the passions and prejudices of mankind; with the sophistry of philosophers, the craft of priests, and the power of the civil government. The doctrine which they taught was directly opposed to the prevailing systems of religion; and yet it spread with amazing rapidity, in the face of all opposition. Multitudes embraced it at the hazard of their lives and fortunes; and it gradually undermined the established idolatry. When we examine the doctrines of the Gospel, we find them, in the highest degree, holy and sublime; capable of producing the most benign effects on the human character, and

infinitely superior to all the discoveries of reason and philosophy. Thus was this inestimable *treasure* committed to *earthen vessels*, comparatively worthless and brittle; and whether we consider the character of the preachers, or the nature of their doctrine, or the success of their ministry, every candid inquirer must allow, that the excellence of the power was of *God* and not of *man*. This would not have been so apparent, had the treasure of divine truth been put into vessels of gold or silver. Had the Gospel been preached by persons of splendid talents, of various learning, or of eminent rank, we should then have been disposed to ascribe its success to natural causes; and therefore we cannot but admire the wisdom of God, in choosing such instruments for accomplishing his merciful designs, as should, from their very weakness, enhance the divine power which wrought in them. Some have thought there is an allusion to the earthen pitchers employed by Gideon in attacking the Midianites, (Judges vii. 19, 20.); this is uncertain. But the most precious jewels were sometimes deposited in earthen jars.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let the ministers of the Gospel be distinguished for faithfulness, diligence, and perseverance. Alas! how many bearing this honoured title, have followed the hidden things of dishonesty, walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully, to justify their vicious practices, or to defend their dangerous errors; and how many are there who, instead of preaching Christ, study to draw the attention of men to *themselves*, and sacrifice the edification of their hearers at the shrine of popular applause. Let it be our constant aim to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and to exhibit the knowledge of the divine glory in Him. Sensible of our own weakness, let us refer all our success to God, and pray that He would shine into our hearts, that we may be more fitted to diffuse the light of the Gospel.

2. Let those who enjoy the advantage of a christian ministry, beware of despising the weakest instrument; let them not, on the other hand, ascribe too much to human efforts. The most eminent preachers are but earthen vessels, and the meanest servant of Christ contains the inestimable treasure of the Gospel. Let them not be displeased when the truth is brought home to their

consciencés, and let them not shut their minds against conviction, lest Satan obtain an advantage over them, "for we are not ignorant of his devices."

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 8—18.

PAUL'S CONSOLATION UNDER TROUBLE.

THE Apostle had compared himself and his fellow-labourers to earthen vessels, comparatively worthless and easily broken. Yet, frail and brittle as they were, they were exposed to many circumstances of a painful nature, and their preservation could only be ascribed to the overruling Providence of God. These he enumerates in the following verses: 8, 9. "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." They were *pressed* (*συνέπιπτον*) on all sides, by persons of every rank, and in every place (*οι παντα*), who, on some occasions, used violence against them; on others, deceit, calumny, or ridicule; so that they seemed ready to be overwhelmed by a complication of dangers and difficulties; yet they were not so *straitened* or shut up (*συνεσχευασμενοι*), as to preclude all hope of relief, or to leave them wholly in the power of their enemies; a way of deliverance was opened, as in the case of the apostles in Jerusalem, (Acts v. 19.) and of Paul and Silas at Philippi, (chap. xvi. 26.) They were often in *perplexity* as to the path of duty, and involved in doubt (*απορομενοι*), as to the possibility either of avoiding or of sustaining the trials that awaited them; yet they never abandoned themselves to *despair* (*απογοισμενοι*), or lost their confidence in God; but strong in faith, they waited the fulfilment of his promises, and against hope believed in hope; not doubting that he would make all things work together for their good, and bring them safely and triumphantly through. They were *persecuted* by unreasonable and wicked men, who pursued after their lives (*διωκομενοι*), with unrelenting hatred, and followed them, from place to place, with unwearied diligence, laying snares for their innocent blood, and rewarding them evil for good. In this unhallowed pursuit, all

ranks and classes were united ; and even some of those who had professed the faith, were offended, and joined the ranks of their enemies. Still, however, they were not utterly *deserted* (*οὐκ ἀπολείπονται*) by their Lord, who stood by them, and strengthened them, and soothed their minds by the abundant consolations of the Gospel : They enjoyed also the fellowship and prayers of his faithful followers. They often seemed to be *thrown down* (*καταβαλλομένοι*), like a person engaged in wrestling with a skilful and powerful adversary, who knew how to take advantage of every circumstance that could harass and grieve their minds ; yet they still rose superior to every danger, and were not abandoned to *destruction* (*ἀπολλομένοι*). Indeed, their whole life was a continued scene of hardship and of suffering ; 10. "they always carried about in the body, the dying (*νεκρῶν*) of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus, might be manifested (*φανερῶν*) in their body." They bore in their persons the scars or traces of those wounds and bruises which they had received in his service, as, in another place, the Apostle says, (Gal. vi. 17.) "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks (*στίγματα*) of the Lord Jesus." They were exposed to the same cruelties which he endured when put to death by wicked men, and were conformed to him in suffering, as well as in character. The recollection of his painful and ignominious death, inspired them with holy courage, and animated them to follow his steps. And the astonishing patience which they displayed, their unexampled perseverance and diligence, their miraculous preservation, and unlooked-for deliverances, afforded abundant proof that He for whom they suffered was still *alive*, in a glorious and exalted state, whence he communicated strength to their minds, and by which he was enabled to defeat the designs, and to overthrow the power, of their persecutors. Thus was the life of Jesus *manifested* in their bodies ; their fortitude, prudence, and presence of mind, were evidently the effect of divine power, and afforded a bright evidence that *He* who died upon the cross was now *alive* for evermore, to bless and protect his servants.

Many of the most zealous and successful preachers of the Gospel, had *already* fallen a sacrifice to the cause of Christ, and had been honoured to lay down their lives for the truth ; and still Paul, and others who survived, were constantly exposed to death in every form ; they stood in jeopardy of their lives every

hour: 11. "For we who live (*οἱ ζῶντες*) are always delivered (*παράδωκεν*) unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh." To this painful situation they cheerfully submitted, from love to their divine Master, for whom they had suffered the loss of all things; and the fact of their being yet alive, after so many dangers, he would again repeat, proved the power, presence, and faithfulness of Jesus Christ. The expression (*ζῶν τε ἰσχυς*) may also intimate, that the life or character of Jesus was manifested in their persons; in their holy and blameless conduct, in their patience and meekness under persecution, and in their readiness to perform offices of kindness even to those who sought their life: *ζῶν* sometimes signifies *manner of living*, (Rom. vi. 4. Ephes. iv. 18.)

Such, indeed, was the trying situation in which they were placed, that they might be said to be exposed to all the fury of the king of terrors, who seemed to set them up as a mark for his arrows, and exerted all his energy for their destruction. They resembled persons labouring under a fatal distemper; their outward troubles not only wasted their strength, but depressed their spirits, and were gradually undermining their health, and shortening their days. But the churches reaped great advantage from these distresses of their teachers: 12. "So then death worketh (*νεκροῦται*) in us, but life in you." Their unwearied labours edified and encreased the church. Their patient sufferings served to prove their sincerity, to illustrate the excellence of the Gospel, and to shew the happy effects of sanctified affliction. Their noble magnanimity powerfully excited the disciples to emulation, and fanned the flame of spiritual life. Thus, they might be said to devote their lives for the good of their fellow-Christians. In them was realized the fable of the pelican, which was said to feed her young with her own blood. Theirs was the affection of a parent, who exerts himself beyond his strength, to supply the wants of his family. They were actuated by feelings of a higher order than those boasted heroes who have sacrificed their life in the cause of civil liberty. In all ages the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church.

In these persecutions, the Apostles displayed the same holy confidence in God, which had supported the minds of the ancient worthies, in similar circumstances; and, when the deliverance came, it called forth the language of exultation and praise. In

this view, Paul might apply to himself the language of the psalmist David, in the 116th Ps. 10th ver. 13. "Having the same spirit of faith," according as it is written, "I believed, therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak." In the passage here quoted, the sacred writer records the goodness of the Lord to him in a season of deep distress. He had been brought to the very gates of death; but in the exercise of believing trust, he had prayed for deliverance, in the full persuasion that he would yet see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. His prayer had been graciously answered; his soul was delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. This he *believed* would be the case; and therefore he gives utterance to the feelings of his grateful heart in a song of praise. So the Apostle, possessing the same divine principle of *faith*, would not conceal the interposition of the God of providence on his behalf, who had hitherto fulfilled his promises on which he had caused him to hope. This encouraged him to persevere in his labours, and inspired him with the blessed hope of immortality. Some understand the words quoted from the psalm, as spoken by *Christ himself*, intimating his firm trust in God in the view of his sufferings, his deliverance from which is there celebrated. In another sense, the Apostle was fully assured of the truth of Christianity; and therefore could not conceal or withhold it from the world, like Peter and John, who told the Jewish council, "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," (Acts iv. 20.) The apostles had no reason to fear what man could do unto them, for they knew that their eternal happiness was secured; 14. "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us also by Jesus, and shall present (παρουσία) us with you." The Saviour had been raised from the dead by the mighty power of God, and was thus become the first fruits of them that sleep; and the same divine energy shall restore to life the bodies of the saints who shall awake from the slumbers of the tomb, at the voice of the Son of God, and shall be presented before the presence of the Father with exceeding great joy. Nor shall the holy apostles be forgotten—they shall appear, with the fruits of their labours, and shall receive a full reward.

The whole economy of providence and grace was arranged with a view to the prosperity and increase of the church. 16. "For

all things are on your account (ὑμεῖς), that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound (or overflow, *ὑπερβαίνειν*) to the glory of God." Thus, not only the preaching of the apostles, but even their *sufferings*, were intended, or overruled, for the furtherance of the Gospel and the edification of believers. The distresses of their leaders called forth the earnest prayers of the faithful; and when a deliverance was granted, through the *abounding goodness* of God, the most fervent *thanksgiving* was offered up by *many* persons on this account; and the benefit conferred, *overflowed* to the glory of God, by affording a new proof of his faithfulness and love, and of the truth and value of the Gospel. The same end was accomplished, when, by the labours or sufferings of the apostles, sinners were converted to God. The abundant grace bestowed on *them*, excited the admiration of angels, gladdened the church on earth, and awakened feelings of the liveliest gratitude in the hearts of those that were saved.

Thus they were animated to persevere in their arduous work, under every discouragement. 16. "Wherefore we do not faint, but though our outward man perish (be destroyed, *διαφθίγγεται*), yet the inward (man) is renewed (*ἀνανεοίται*) day by day." True, indeed, their earthly bodies were gradually *dissolving* and *wasting away*, through hardship and persecution, fatigue and want; but it was only the *outer man* (*ὁ ἔξω ἀνθρώπος*), the external covering, which must in the course of nature, soon return to corruption and dust; while the immortal soul, *the inner man* (*ὁ ἐνδὸς*), was daily invigorated and strengthened by these afflictions, and was gradually *transformed* into the moral image of God. Besides, their present troubles, though they might, to the eye of *sense*, appear heavy and protracted, were not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall follow. 17. "For the momentary light thing (*το παροῦσα ελαφρὸν*) of our affliction, worketh out for us an exceedingly exceeding and eternal weight of glory (*καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὡς ὑπερβολὴν αἰωνίου βάρους δόξης*)." Here the Apostle contrasts his sufferings on earth with the blessedness of heaven. The language is exceedingly lofty, and loses, in a translation, the strength and beauty of the original. He denominates his troubles here, *light* and *momentary*. Yet his whole life, from the period of his conversion, was a scene of suffering. He suffered both in body and in mind, from unbelieving Jews, idolatrous

Gentiles, and false brethren ; but all consideration of his sorrows was swallowed up in the prospect of endless felicity. This he denominates *glory*, as contrasted with affliction—a *weight of glory*, in opposition to the light affliction of this life—*eternal*, as contrasted with momentary sorrow—*exceeding great*, yea, *far more exceeding*, as that which beggars all description, and surpasses the utmost force of language, and the loftiest flight of imagination. After heaping together all the epithets that human speech affords, still the representation falls infinitely short of the reality: "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him." The saints shall be introduced into a state of inconceivable dignity and blessedness, of perfect light, purity, and joy: "they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." The Hebrew word כבוד signifies both weight and glory, and the Apostle joins these two ideas, by calling the happiness of heaven a weight of glory. Our feeble faculties would sink under the overpowering radiance; and our souls must be invigorated and refined, before we shall be able to bear it.

This weight of glory is wrought out by the afflictions of life, because by means of these, the soul is purified from the love of sin, and trained up for the inheritance of the saints in light: the affections are estranged from the world, and placed on things above; the promised rest is rendered more sweet by the retrospect of past troubles; and those who have drank most deeply of the Saviour's cup of sorrow, shall sit nearest to him in his mediatorial kingdom. Trouble, *of itself*, will neither procure a title to heaven, nor gain us the favour of God. The sorrow of the wicked worketh *death*, and hardens them in sin; but when sanctified by divine grace, it is often the means of drawing us away from the broken cisterns of earthly pleasure, to the fountain of living waters: Accordingly, the Apostle connects the hope of eternal life with the exercise of faith in unseen realities: 18. "While we look (*ἐκνοεῖται ὁ φανερὸς*) not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." To ensure possession of this blessedness, we must look away from all terrestrial objects, and *aim* (*ἐκνοεῖται*) at the things that are

invisible, as the great scope of our being. It is only while we direct our view to *these*, that our present affliction will appear light and momentary, and shall issue in this eternal weight of glory. But we may well give to the objects of *faith* the chief place in our regard, for they are infinitely superior to those of *sight*. All the things that are seen,—the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, are but *for a season*, (*παροναίκα*); they elude our grasp, or perish in the using; consequently, they cannot be a proper portion for an immortal spirit. But the unseen objects of *faith* are certain in their attainment, satisfying in their nature, and *eternal* in their duration.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The christian life is an alternation of joy and sorrow. But in the midst of trouble and perplexity the believer is cheered by the presence of Christ, supported by his grace, and animated by the lively hope of immortality. How superior the consolation which the Gospel affords, when compared with the most admired systems of philosophy! Which of the sages of antiquity could express themselves in such animated strains, when assailed by the afflictions of life? Nothing but the sure prospect of eternal glory can preserve the soul in peace, when the storms of adversity beat around us. This alone can reconcile us to our approaching dissolution, and enable us to adopt the language of David, “My heart and flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

2. Let us rejoice that Jesus lives to protect his servants. Let us seek supplies of grace from the fulness that is in him. Then we shall manifest both the energy of his power, and the beauties of his character, in our mortal bodies; and when these are reduced to dust, we shall enjoy the blessed hope of being raised by his omnipotent arm, and presented to him in one happy company, with apostles and prophets, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

3. How many are the trials incident to the faithful discharge of the christian ministry! Christian churches seldom duly consider, that while they enjoy the abundant labours of their beloved pastors, death is already at work in them, and bringing them swiftly to the tomb. But let *them* rejoice, if, by their light afflic-

tions, which are but for a moment, they are instrumental in bringing their fellow sinners to spiritual life. Such was the spirit of Paul, "Yea (says he) and if I be poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all," (Phil. ii. 17.) How necessary is it that *faith* should precede *teaching*; that those who take the care of souls, should have an experimental knowledge of the truth and excellence of the Gospel, that they may be enabled to say, "We believed, and therefore have we spoken." "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," (1 John i. 3.)

CHAPTER FIFTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—9.

PAUL'S HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

THE Apostle had referred to the support which he had derived in the midst of his labours and sufferings, from the hope of a glorious immortality in the heavenly world. He now proceeds more fully to explain the nature, and to declare the certainty, of this future state of blessedness. He contrasts the present condition of the saints of God, with the happiness awaiting them in the life to come. L. "For we know that if our earthly house of (this) tabernacle, were dissolved, we have a building of (or from, =) God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Here he compares the body which we now possess, to an *earthly house* (*σκήνη; οἶκος*), or a cottage of clay, a mean and

frail abode. It was originally formed out of the dust—it requires constant nourishment to keep it in repair—it is liable to many diseases and infirmities—it weighs down the soul to its native earth, and is destined shortly to return to the ground from which it was taken. He calls it a house *of a tent* (του σκηνοῦς), that is, a temporary and slight habitation,—such as is used by a traveller,—reared of perishable materials, easily removed and taken down, ill fitted long to sustain the rough tempests of life. This abode the soul occupies as a tenant, for a limited space. But it is essentially *distinct* from the material frame, and is not affected by its dissolution. This “clay tenement” is no sooner brought to perfection, than it begins to decay. If not prematurely taken down by sickness or by violence, it nevertheless gradually loses its strength, and becomes unfit for the performance of its usual functions. Its beauty consumes away, the senses lose their tone, the members become stiff and feeble, the pulse gradually ceases to beat, and, by the stroke of death, the whole fabric falls to pieces, and *wastes away* (καταλύθη) in the grave. This is the lot of all mankind, the consequence and penalty of sin, from which even the pious and the useful are not exempt. But while, to the unbeliever, all beyond the grave is darkness and gloom, very different are the prospects of the disciples of Christ. *They know*, from the infallible testimony of God’s word on which he has caused them to rely, and from a firm persuasion of his faithfulness, goodness, and power, that there remaineth a rest for his people beyond the grave, and that death shall introduce them into a far more exalted and perfect state of existence. In their Father’s house are many mansions, which their Saviour has gone to prepare for them. This glorious abode the Apostle styles a *building* (οικοδομη) in opposition to a tent—a building *from God*, as contrasted with the mean and perishing works of men—a house *not made with hands* (αχειροποίητον), and therefore not liable to waste away—*eternal* (αιώνιον), as distinguished from a temporary erection—in the heavens, as opposed to an earthly habitation. By this heavenly house he cannot mean the resurrection body, for he speaks of our entering into possession of it *immediately* after the dissolution of the present frame, and as the residence of the spirit when *absent from the body*; nor can it be proved, that he refers to some *etherial form* in which the soul shall reside in the separate state,

though this opinion seems to be expressed in the poetical version of the passage, used in the Scottish church:—

“We know that when the soul uncloth’d
Shall from this body fly,
’Twill animate a purer frame,
With life that cannot die;”

but he evidently alludes to that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,—the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where the glory of the Saviour is especially displayed. Yet he does not exclude that more perfect state of blessedness which shall be enjoyed after the resurrection. But who can describe the magnificence of this building! It is infinitely worthy of God, suited to the capacity of angels and glorified saints. It has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, (Rev. xxi. 18—23.) Dr M^r Knight maintains, that the earthly house cannot refer to the *body*, but must be interpreted literally of such habitations as the saints possess in this world, because it is contrasted, not with the resurrection body, but with the heavenly city: But this seems to lower the sense of the passage, and attaches too much importance to those accommodations, which the apostles could hardly be said to enjoy. Nothing is more common than to speak of the body under the figure of a *tent*: It is twice used in this sense in the 2d Epistle of Peter, 1st chap. 13th and 14th verses: “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.” In the same manner, in Job iv. 19., men are described as “dwelling in houses of clay.” The Apostle is not speaking of the final dissolution of the *earth*, but of the intermediate state of departed souls, as is clear from verses 6, 8.

Our attention is next directed to the circumstances which render the heavenly state so desirable: 2. “For in this (house or tent, *οικία*) we groan earnestly desiring (*ἐκζητοῦμεν*) to be clothed upon (*ἐνδύσασθαι*) with our habitation (*οικητήριον*) which is from heaven.” While in this earthly body, the christian expresses his uneasiness in groans and tears. He sighs (*στενάζειν*) under

the pressure of natural infirmity,—under a consciousness of remaining sin; under the afflictive dispensations of Providence, or the fiery trial of persecution; he mourns over the prevalence of unbelief, and laments his distance from God. So in Rom. viii. 23. the Apostle says of himself, and others who had the first fruits of the Spirit, “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” The soul of the believer cleaves to the dust, and he eagerly longs for that period when he shall be released from the prison of clay; when he shall put off his earthly tabernacle, and when he shall enter into the new Jerusalem which cometh from God out of heaven, and take possession of his appointed mansion. Then, he knows, he shall put on the garments of light, purity, and joy. Thus, though deprived of an earthly body, he shall not be found *naked*; he shall no more be liable to want, disease, or pain: 3. “And surely (or since indeed, *ὡς γὰρ καὶ*) being clothed, we shall not be found naked or destitute (*γυμνοί*).” In our version, the conjunctive particles are translated, “if so be,” which would imply uncertainty; but the Apostle had just expressed his confident hope of immortality, (ver. 1.) Dr Parkhurst renders the 3d verse thus: “Since, indeed, we shall be found clothed upon, not naked.” The Apostle seems here to contrast the glorious state of departed saints, with the destitute condition of our first parents, when they had lost their original innocence. “Their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”

In the 4th verse he explains more fully the cause of his present uneasiness. “For we that are in the tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not that we wish to be unclothed (*εἰς ὃ οὐ βέλομεν ἐκδύνασθαι*), but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” While sojourning in his earthly tent, the Apostle, in common with other christians, groaned, being burdened with a body of sin and death, which made him eagerly cry out for deliverance, (Rom. vii. 24.) Many things rendered his continuance in the world far from desirable. At the same time, he did not indulge impatient complaints of the hardships he was called to sustain, or long for his departure, as one that is weary of life—he did not wish to be *unclothed*, as one who peevishly deserts his post. Death was not desirable for its own sake; and life, with all its troubles, is naturally sweet to the soul. He had also duties to perform on earth; and he was willing to remain in the body, if it

were more needful for the church, (Phil. i. 24.) Above all, he was ready to wait his Lord's time, "in whose hand his breath was, and whose were all his ways," (Dan. v. 23.) But the happiness of heaven was so superior to what he could hope to possess on earth, that he could not but look forward with joyful anticipation to his expected change. This he did, because all the imperfections of the present condition, all the pains and sufferings of the mortal part, (*το θνητόν*) would then be *swallowed up*, that is, completely lost and forgotten, amidst the joys and transports of eternal life. The soul, indeed, might be said only *then* to *begin to live*. Dr M'Knight would translate the words *ἐξέρχεται* and *εἰσέρχεται*, *to go out*, and *to enter permanently in*, as in ver. 2. "In this tent we groan, earnestly desiring to go permanently into our habitation which is heavenly;" but though the verb *εἰσέρχεται* sometimes signifies to go in, the natural meaning of the compound word, *εἰσέρχεται*, is certainly to *clothe* or to *put on*; and in the middle and passive, to be clothed upon, or arrayed, (*superinduere*, Schleusner), and in the third verse, being *clothed*, is plainly opposed to being found *naked*. He thinks it absurd to speak of being clothed with a house; but such variation of metaphor is not unfrequent in classic writers; and in this passage, there is a transition from the emblem of a house to that of a garment. The same figure is employed by Peter, (2 Epis. i. 14.) as above quoted, "Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is near at hand, (*ταχὺν ὥσπερ ἡ ἀποβολὴ τοῦ σκηνώματος μου*)."

In 1 Cor. xv. 53. the same verb, *ἐξέρχεται*, is rightly translated *put on*, as admitted by this critic. Some interpret the expression, "not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon," as if the Apostle desired to be translated like Enoch and Elijah, without seeing death. But it does not appear that he ever entertained such a hope.

The *hopes* which the apostles possessed, by which they were sustained under suffering, raised above the fear of death, and inspired with such an ardent desire of immortality, were derived from a divine source. 5. "Now, he that hath wrought (*κατεργασμένος*) us for this same thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest (*ἀρραβών*) of the Spirit." It was *He* who had begotten them again to this lively hope, who had filled their minds with peace and joy in believing, and had *fitted* them for the heavenly inheritance. Of *this* he would in due time put them in possession. In the meantime, he had given them a blessed foretaste of the ap-

proaching felicity, in the enlightening, purifying, and consolatory influences of the Holy Spirit, which were so excellent and exhilarating, as to afford a sure pledge of eternal joys.

Thus taught, and thus supported, the apostles were emboldened at all times to preach the word without fear. 6. "Therefore we are always confident (*ἀσπερὺς παρρησίας*), knowing that while we are at home (*σώζομεθα*) in the body, we are absent from the Lord." To them death had no terrors; yea, they rather longed for the crown of martyrdom, as the signal of welcome to their heavenly home. Whilst *sojourning* in the body, they had indeed occasional glimpses of the Saviour's glory, and were favoured with evident tokens of his gracious presence; still they might be said to be absent from the Lord, in comparison with the free and endearing intercourse to which they knew they would be admitted in the regions of immortality. They viewed themselves as strangers in a strange land. They saw through a glass darkly, and they longed to penetrate the intervening clouds, that they might see Him face to face. At present, they were called to exercise faith in him, as an unseen Saviour; they had not yet received the fulfilment of the promises, but they saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth, (Heb. xi. 13.) No visible displays of the glories of heaven were presented to their bodily eyes. It was the object of hope and not of sense; "but hope which is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24.) therefore he observes, ver. 7. "for we walk by faith, not by sight." Faith, however, would in due time be exchanged for sight; and accordingly, he would again repeat, notwithstanding the present distresses, ver. 8. "we are emboldened, I say, (*ἀσπερὺς*) and are well pleased (*ευδοκούμεν*), rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." So in Phil. i. 23., he says, he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." They were animated by the glorious prospect, to persevere in their arduous struggle, and were well satisfied to part with life itself, that they might reach the world of light, and enter into the joy of their Lord. In the meantime, it was the object of their highest ambition, (*φιλοτιμούμεθα*), to conduct themselves in such a manner, that whether speedily released from the body, or left for a season to struggle with the trials of life, they might be approved, by their righteous Judge, for their prudence, fidelity, and

zeal. 9. "Wherefore also we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing (*euagoroi*) to him."

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from this subject, that "the souls of believers after death do immediately pass into glory." Some have taught that the spirit sleeps in an unconscious state till the resurrection; but the Apostle informs us, that, to be "absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." So in writing to the Philippians, he observes, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," Philip. i. 23. It is therefore evident, that he expected to enter on a state of glory and blessedness, on leaving the body. This hope emboldened him to encounter the greatest hardships, and rendered it difficult for him to decide whether life or death were more desirable, even with the prospect of increasing usefulness in the church. This could have been no matter of doubt, had he anticipated a state of unconscious existence. He is not speaking of that admittance into the presence of Christ which shall take place at the last day; for then the bodies of the saints shall be restored; but of being present with the Lord, when absent *from* the body, that is, in the intermediate state. This agrees with what our Saviour said to the penitent malefactor, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. It also confirms the declaration of the beloved Apostle, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," (Rev. xiv. 13.)

2. We see what it is that renders heaven desirable; it is the presence of Christ. So the Psalmist exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee!" (Psa. lxxiii. 25.) To be *present with the Lord* is the perfection of glory and blessedness; for where He is, there can be no more darkness, sorrow, or pain. What a source of comfort is here, under the pressure of bodily affliction, or when deprived of beloved friends! This world is not our home. We are in a foreign land, and we look for another country, even an heavenly. The body is rather a prison than a desirable habitation. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain under

the curse. Why should we desire to be always absent from our Lord?

3. Every one who has this hope, "purifies himself even as Christ is pure." It is his highest aim, whether living or dying, to be accepted of Him. Some suppose, that, to walk by faith and not by sight, is to trust in God, in the absence of all evidence, that we have been regenerated. But this is not the Apostle's meaning. Faith is not opposed to *feeling*, but to *sight* (*uideri*), and we have the sure word of prophecy to guide us in our path; "unto which we do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts," (9 Pet. i. 19.) How wretched must be the condition of those, who, when unclothed, or separated from the body, shall be found naked, before God, with no covering for their guilt! Let us make haste to put on the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness. Thus we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

THE PROSPECT OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME,

SECTION SECOND.

THE PROSPECT OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME,

SECTION SECOND.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 10—16.

THE PROSPECT OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME,

THE PROSPECT OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME, A MOTIVE TO FAITHFULNESS,

THE PROSPECT OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME,

THE Apostle had described the happiness awaiting the righteous in the future world, and had referred to the earnest desire which he felt to lay aside his earthly body, and to enter on possession of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This animated his mind under every trial, and urged him to faithfulness, diligence, and perseverance in the work of the ministry. He now states *another reason* of his boldness and zeal; the anticipation of that solemn account which he, in common with his fellow-christians, would be called to render at the great day: 10. "For we must all appear before the tribunal (*βῆμα*) of Christ, that every one may receive the things (done) in, or by, the body (*κατὰ τὸ σῶμα*), according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or evil." Here he notices, in the *first* place, the *certain*ty of a judgment to come, "we must appear," whether we choose or

not, according to the righteous appointment of Him, who has an entire authority over us. In every age there have been scoffers walking after their own lusts, who have said, "where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.) But God "has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," (Acts xvii. 31.) Even heathens could argue in favour of a future judgment, from the unequal distribution of good and evil in the present state; from the voice of natural conscience, and from a consideration of the equity of the divine government. *2dly*, He declares the *universality* of this judgment: we must *all* appear, without respect of persons or of office—the Jew as well as the Gentile—the teacher and the taught—*young and old—rich and poor—bond and free—before Him shall be gathered all nations, people and tongues.* *3dly*, *Its nature.* It is a *manifestation* of the characters of the persons arraigned, including the motives and ends of their actions. So the word *φανερωνται*, signifies, "we must be made manifest;" there will be no room for evasion or disguise. Every person will appear in his true colours. Notice, again, the *actions* to be reviewed, "the deeds done, (*τα ρηματα*), in or by the body;" the works of faith and labours of love performed by the righteous shall not be forgotten; the toils and sufferings which they endured in *the body*, for the sake of their Lord, shall be graciously recompensed. The unholy actions of the wicked shall be brought to light, in which the body became the willing *instrument* of gratifying the inordinate passions of the soul. Some read the passage, "that every one may receive things in the body, according to what he hath done:" That is, the good actions of the just shall be rewarded, and the evil deeds of the ungodly shall be punished, in the resurrection body; and there can be no doubt that in both cases, the body will bear its part. Thus our Saviour instructs us, that it is better that one of our members should perish, than that our whole body should be cast into hell, and he warns us to fear Him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell, (Matt. v. 29.; x. 28.) Again, this judgment will be strictly *impartial*; every one shall receive "according to what he hath done, whether good or evil;" he shall reap the fruit of his own ways, and be filled with

his own devices; they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, (Gal. vi. 8.) Lastly, observe who is to be our Judge: the Lord Jesus Christ. He is appointed to this office by the Father, and is fully qualified for the discharge of it, being possessed of infinite knowledge, justice, power, and holiness. In this arrangement we discover the wisdom and goodness of God. He who was set at nought, judged and condemned by men, in his state of humiliation, shall now appear, in his proper dignity, as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. We shall be judged by one in human nature, who was in all points tried as we are, and who has thorough knowledge of our condition; there will therefore be no room to complain of *injustice*. He was distinguished, while on earth, by meekness, gentleness, and love, and we shall have no reason to charge him with undue severity. He will then appear arrayed in majesty and girded with might. Every eye shall see him—every knee shall bow to him. The fact of his holding this high office proves his *essential deity*. Infinite knowledge, rectitude, and power, are necessarily implied in Him, who is to be Judge of the quick and dead. This is the conclusion formed by the Apostle in a parallel passage, (Rom. xiv. 10, 12.) “For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God; so, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Our Saviour will come in a sudden and unexpected manner, “as a thief in the night,” (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.); he will appear “in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” Then all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; but his saints shall lift up their heads with joy, for the day of their complete redemption will then arrive. On this solemn occasion, the righteousness of God will be displayed—his government vindicated—the apparent inequalities in providence rectified, and all insubordination for ever subdued. “The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”

It will then appear what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God! Who shall abide the day of his coming? What heart shall endure—what hands be strong, when he shall deal with them? What are the combined efforts of earth and hell, when opposed to his irresistible might! By his powerful

arm he drove the rebel angels out of heaven—he expelled our first parents from paradise—he overwhelmed the old world with the waters of the flood—he consumed with fire the cities of the plain. And at that day “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works thereof shall be burnt up.” Men’s hearts shall fail them for fear,—they shall cry to the rocks to fall on them, and to the hills to cover them, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Now the Apostle had a lively conception of the grandeur and certainty of these events: 11. “Knowing, therefore, the terror (or fear, *φοβος*) of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest to God, and I trust also we are made manifest in (or to, *πρὸς*) your consciences.” The expression “knowing the terror of the Lord,” may also imply, that he had some experience of the pangs of a guilty conscience; he had been taught what a vain thing it is to contend with the power of the Almighty Saviour, when he lay trembling and astonished at his feet, (Acts ix. 6.), and he was anxious to conduct himself in such a manner, that he should be clear from the blood of all men; he knew they were in a state of sin and danger, and exposed to the vengeance of heaven. He could not therefore see them perishing around him, without warning them, by the most persuasive arguments, and in the most earnest and affectionate manner, to flee from the wrath to come. To this he was impelled, not more by a sense of duty, than by feelings of compassion and benevolence. In doing this, he was aware that his character and motives *lay open* to the all-seeing eye of God; but conscious of his sincerity, he rejoiced in the thought, amidst the reproaches and calumnies of an ungodly world; and he could not but indulge the *hope*, that the Corinthians also were convinced, in their own *consciences*, of the faithfulness and consistency of his conduct, though the pride and prejudices of some, prevented them from making the acknowledgment.

He did not advance these things, as some might be ready to allege, with a view to court their good opinion: 12. “For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you occasion of boasting (*καυχῆσθαι*) on our account, that ye may have (an answer) to them who boast (or glory) in appearance, and not in heart.” It was painful for him to be obliged to say so much in his

own justification; but he considered it his duty to set before them such proofs of his integrity and zeal, as might afford them an opportunity (*αφορμὴν*) to glorify God on his account, for the abundant grace bestowed on him, and enable them to *refute* the false aspersions of those teachers, who endeavoured to bring his ministry into contempt, and to ingratiate themselves into the favour of the people. They founded their claim of superiority on those *outward advantages*, in which they alleged Paul was deficient,—on their birth, education, talents or personal accomplishments (*ἡ περὶ σωματικὰ*); while they underrated the less shewy, but more solid, qualities of the heart,—humility, devotedness to God, superiority to the world, and faithfulness in the discharge of duty.

13. The Apostle and his companions were sometimes charged with *madness* by the men of the world, on account of the mysterious nature of their doctrines,—the earnestness of their manner,—their patience under suffering,—their contempt of danger, and their laborious exertions in preaching, without any apparent advantage; they were considered as devoid of common prudence, as reckless of their own safety, reputation, and interest. When the Epicureans and Stoics encountered Paul, they exclaimed, “what will this babbler say?” (Acts xvii. 18.), and when he made his defence before Agrippa, he was interrupted by the Roman magistrate, in this indecorous manner: “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad, (chap. xxvi. 24.) But none of these things moved them; “for whether we be beside ourselves (*ἑξῆς ἡμεῶν*) it is to (or for) God, or whether we be sober (of a sound mind, *σωφρονουμένους*), it is for you (*ὑμῖν*).” To the reproach of *foolishness* they cheerfully submitted, for the glory of God, from love to him, and to promote the interests of his kingdom; and they committed their cause to him who judgeth righteously, and who could duly appreciate their character and motives. When at other times they pursued a more cautious method, and were counted *sober* or discreet persons; when they used every prudent means to preserve their liberty and their lives from danger, when they argued with men according to their different views, habits, or tempers, appealing with coolness and deliberation, to reason, experience or revelation, for the truth of their doctrines,—it was for *the sake of the church*,—to promote the edification of believers,—to silence the cavils of gain-sayers, to secure the attention, and to remove the prejudices, of their hearers in general.

In *both cases* they were *impelled* by a sense of the infinite goodness of the Lord Jesus, and by a lively feeling of gratitude for his redeeming mercy, which carried them forward, like an impetuous torrent, and left them no room to deliberate with flesh and blood, or to consult the cold maxims of human policy. 14, 15. "For the love of Christ constraineth (or presseth, *συνιστά*) us, who judge (*ἀξιωματοὶ*) thus, that if one died for all (*ὅτις πάντες*), then were all dead: and (that) he died for all, that they who live (*οἱ ζῶντες*), should no longer live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again." Their admiration of the Saviour's love had all the force of a moral *necessity* lying upon them, and superseded every other motive to exertion. Nor was this feeling unreasonable or inordinate; it was the dictate of sound judgment. For to Him they owed all their happiness in time, and all their hopes for eternity. They knew that he had, by the grace of God, "tasted death for every man;" yea, that he had voluntarily laid down his life in their room (*ὅντις*). But if it were necessary that the surety should suffer death, this of course implied, that those whom he represented merited this punishment; they were *all* under the condemnation of the law, *dead* in trespasses and sins, and liable to endless misery, "which is the second death." By thus giving himself a ransom for many, he has bought them off from the curse,—he has delivered them from the wrath to come; they are legally absolved from guilt; they are considered, in the eye of law, as having suffered the penalty; they have *died in him* as their substitute, and by faith in his blood they are quickened to spiritual *life*, and raised to endless glory; consequently to him they are indebted for spiritual and eternal *life*: and what could be more reasonable than that they should devote their life *to him*, by whose kindness it had been restored, so that henceforth he should be the great object of their love, and the great end of their being? *They judged this* to be their duty, to live no longer to themselves; for the gratification of their own ease and pleasure, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, without any regard to the honour or the authority of their Saviour; but they considered themselves laid under the most powerful obligations to devote their time, their talents, their influence, and their *lives* to his service. Nay they judged this not merely to be their duty, but the great *design* of His dying in their stead: "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," (Titus ii. 14.) And surely no argument can be more forcible or affecting, than such an exhibition of divine benevolence. This argument is elsewhere stated more fully, (Rom. xiv. 7, 9.) "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." As was observed before, (1 Epis. viii. 11.) the virtue of Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world; but the benefits of it are available only to those who are made able by faith in him.

Such being the spiritual condition of mankind, all are on a level in the sight of God, and every christian must be considered as equally indebted to divine grace for his salvation. Outward distinctions are therefore of no further advantage. Those who believe in Christ are entitled to all the privileges of the family of God, to whatever nation they may have belonged, or whatever may have been their former character; while no external advantages will avail those who are still in a state of spiritual death. The Apostle durst not make any other distinction between different classes than this: 16. "Wherefore, henceforth we know no man according to the flesh; yea, though (*ὡς δὲ καὶ*, and if even) we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now, henceforth, (after this manner) we know him no more." Before the introduction of the Gospel, the apostles, in common with other Jews, gloried in their relation to Abraham, and in the outward privileges of their nation; they looked upon themselves as the peculiar favourites of Heaven, and considered all other men as unclean; as outcasts from the divine mercy. But now they had been taught to call no man common or unclean; they knew that Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, "to make in himself, of the two, one new man, so making peace." They would therefore give no preference to their own countrymen, on the ground of carnal descent. The Apostle would not be restrained from preaching to the Gentiles, who were equally with the Jews, the objects of the Saviour's dying love. Neither could he overlook the faults of his christian brethren. He must faithfully execute the laws of Christ against offenders, however painful the duty might be. He dare not allow himself to be influenced by private friendship, or personal

obligations. The relation in which he stood to any fellow creature must not interfere with the allegiance which was due to the Saviour. We are told of Brutus, that he condemned his two sons to death, when he found them plotting against the liberties of their country; he sacrificed his feelings as a parent, to what he esteemed his duty as a magistrate. The factious teachers might seek to shelter themselves under the plea of being the Apostle's countrymen, but he was determined to *know no man after the flesh*. He, indeed, like the rest of his brethren, had once *known*, or esteemed, *Christ after the flesh*; they had expected a temporal Messiah, who should advance the glory of their nation by his victories. Some of them had also personally known and conversed with Jesus as a friend. But they *now* attached no importance to this circumstance. They were better instructed in the nature of his kingdom. They knew that their connection with Christ, as descended from the stock of Abraham, after the flesh, would, of itself, profit them nothing. He was also far exalted above the want of any personal attentions from *them*; and he would acknowledge no relationship to himself but that of the obedience of faith. "For who is my mother, and who are my brethren? (he asks)—whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," (Matt. xii. 48—50.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us often reflect on that solemn period, when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; and seeing we shall receive from him according to the deeds done in the body, let us give diligence to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. Let all who know the terror of the Lord, use all their influence to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come. Let the preachers of the Gospel manifest their sincerity in the sight of God, and in the consciences of their hearers, by the holiness and usefulness of their lives: Then there will be no occasion for recommending themselves, and their people will have a ready answer to all the calumnies that may be circulated against their pastors.

2. It is no new charge against the disciples of Christ, that "religion has made them mad." But let not "the dread of the

world's loud laugh," deter us from pursuing the path of duty. If it be only on account of our zeal for the glory of God, our constant attendance on his service, our habitual fear of offending Him, that we are considered as *beside ourselves*, it is in fact a proof of a sound mind; and we may retort the charge on those, who, with all their worldly prudence, neglect the one thing needful, and abandon themselves to the pursuit of deceitful vanities.

8. But what return can we make for the love of Christ? It passeth knowledge! That the Prince of Life should die for sinful men—that he should have remembered us in our low estate; and, to save us from going down to the pit, should himself have become our all-sufficient ransom, this is a mystery which we can never fully comprehend, and into which the angels desire to look. What motive can be imagined more powerful than *this*, to excite gratitude, admiration, and love—to deprive temptation of its force—to wear our hearts from the world, and to make us willing to do or suffer all things for Jesus' sake!

"Survey the wond'rous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise—
Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood—with blood divine!
With blood divine of Him I made my foe!
Persisted to provoke! though woo'd and aw'd,
Blest and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne!
Nor I alone—a rebel universe—
My species up in arms! not one exempt!
Yet, for the foulest of the foul he dies!"

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 17—21.

THE WORLD RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

In the foregoing verses the Apostle had stated the grand design of our Saviour's death, to produce an entire devotedness

to his service and glory. This is the only criterion of true Christianity. He who is thus constrained by the love of Christ, must be acknowledged as a brother, whatever character he formerly bore, or to whatever nation he might belong. While he who is not affected by the Saviour's love, who lives only to himself, affords no evidence of his being a child of God, whatever external privileges he may enjoy. This point the Apostle establishes more fully in the 17th verse, in which he describes the character of a real christian. "Therefore, if any one (*ὃς*) be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away (*παρῆλθον*), behold, all things are become new." To be in Christ, it is not enough that we have been baptized into the christian faith, that we bear the christian name, and have assumed a profession of the Gospel; we must be vitally united to him through faith, by which the merits of his death are imparted to our souls. By this means also, the principle of spiritual life is maintained. This mystical union is represented under a variety of figures. The believer is in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, as the stones are in the building, as the members are in the body. (John xv. 1—7. Ephes. ii. 20, 21.; v. 30.) Thus an entire moral revolution is effected in his character; "there is a new creation," (*καινὴ κτίσις*); so the original expression signifies. Not only is he reformed, but he is created anew; his heart is not merely rectified, but a new heart is implanted. His understanding is illuminated, his affections are sanctified, his will is brought into subjection to the law of Christ, his conversation, pursuits, and manner of life are changed. He is born again of the Spirit, through the incorruptible seed of the word. He is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. He who was dead in sins is quickened to spiritual life. "The old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he should not serve sin." Though essentially the same as a man, he exhibits a moral aspect entirely different. He is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. These expressions must mean something more than an external reformation. To be born again, to be created anew, to be raised from death to life, are phrases employed by the Holy Spirit to designate that renovation of heart which is justly denominated *conversion*, and without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. This change of state is accompanied

with a corresponding alteration of *character*. "Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new." *Formerly* the sinner had no delight in God; *now* he esteems him as his chief joy; sin was cherished and palliated, now it is abhorred and lamented; he saw no beauty in the Saviour that he should desire Him, now he loves him supremely, as the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; he took no pleasure in perusing the oracles of truth, *now* they are the joy and rejoicing of his heart. He felt no regard for the people of God, *as such*; they are now esteemed as the excellent of the earth, in whom is all his delight. The Sabbath was a weariness to him, and he was ready to exclaim, *when will it be over?* Now he hails its approach, as the holy and honourable day of the Lord. Secret prayer was either entirely neglected, or performed in a cold and formal manner; now he esteems it a privilege and an honour to pour out his heart before God. The imaginations of his heart were foolish, sinful, and worldly; now he hates vain thoughts, and prays to be cleansed from secret faults. His conversation was carnal and trifling; now it is spiritual and edifying, ministering grace unto the hearers. The cares, the amusements, and the friendships of the world were all his aim, and all his concern; *now* his heart, his conversation, and his treasure, are in heaven. From being proud, sensual, revengeful, and covetous; he becomes humble, chaste, meek, benevolent. Every high thought is cast down, and, as a little child, he sits at the feet of Jesus to learn his word. All manner of sin is forsaken, and every grace of the Spirit is cultivated.

This blessed change is effected by a divine power. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." 18. "But (δὲ) all things are of God, who hath reconciled (καταλλάξας) us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of the reconciliation (τῆς καταλλαγῆς)." As in the natural world, all things derive their being from God, who created them for his own glory, so in the dispensations of mercy, the pardon, conversion, sanctification, and final redemption of sinners, are to be traced to his sovereign pleasure, and ascribed to his glorious grace. Of his own will he begets his spiritual seed by the word of truth; by his power they are preserved, by his wisdom they are guided, and by his abundant mercy they are glorified. Particularly, to Him belongs the praise

of devising the stupendous plan of redemption, by which he reconciles to himself the rebellious children of men. In a way honourable to his holiness, justice, and truth, he removes the enmity of their mind; he subdues their rebellious will; he sheds abroad his love in their heart; he restores them to his favour and friendship; he renews them after his own image, and blesses them with all heavenly and spiritual blessings. This reconciliation is effected, not on the ground of their repentance; not by works of righteousness which they have done; not by the arbitrary exercise of mercy, but through the mediation of his own dear Son, who, by his obedience and death, has satisfied divine justice; magnified and honoured the law, and made a full atonement for sin. It has been insinuated, that sin might at once have been pardoned without an atonement; but in the remission of guilt, it was necessary that the righteousness of God should be declared, his hatred of sin displayed, and the obedience of the believer secured. This is provided for by the substitution of Christ in our room. Some have represented this as implying that God was *unwilling* to pardon the offender; but the very opposite conclusion is the true one: the very method of reconciliation originated with him; he provided the most costly sacrifice; he "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life."—The divine goodness further appears, if we consider in what manner the Gospel was *promulgated*. It would have been of no avail to men, had it not been published; nor would it have so well suited our condition, as moral agents, had it been proclaimed by a voice from heaven, or committed to the ministry of angels. It was therefore entrusted to the *apostles*, who were our fellow-sinners: men of like infirmities with ourselves, who had experienced its efficacy in their own souls. At the same time its truth was abundantly confirmed by the miracles which they wrought, and the spiritual gifts they conferred. Thus qualified, they were commissioned to proclaim this divine message to the world, and invested by God with the apostolic office, which is emphatically called the *ministry of reconciliation*, as contrasted with the law, the ministry of condemnation.

To bring this delightful message more clearly before the view of the Corinthian church, the Apostle gives them a short summary of its contents, as he had often proclaimed it in their hear-

ing : 19. "Namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing (or reckoning, λογίζομενος) to them their trespasses, and hath committed to us (θεμενωσεν ἡμῖν, hath put in us, *M^r Knight*,) the word of reconciliation." It was the design of the Gospel to make known the interesting and important truth, that "God was manifested in the flesh," in the person of Christ, his only begotten Son, "who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" thus he purchased the church with his own blood; he blotted out the handwriting that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; having by himself purged our sins, he absolves the sinner from guilt, without any impeachment of his glorious perfections; he holds our debt as paid; divine justice demands no further satisfaction at our hands; a full discharge is granted of all our numerous and aggravated offences. Not to impute sin, is considered by the Apostle as equivalent to imputing righteousness without works, (Rom. iv. 6—8.) Some read the passage, "God was by Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) reconciling the world to himself;" this is agreeable to the preceding context, where the preposition διὰ (by or through) is used. It is also confirmed by the parallel passage in Colossians, (i. 19, 20.) where it is said that it pleased God "by him (δι' αὐτοῦ) to reconcile all things to himself." This then was the substance of that glorious Gospel, which, the Apostle would again repeat, had been intrusted to him and his fellow-labourers, and which had been put into their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

In making known these overtures of mercy to men, they appeared as the representatives of the King of heaven. They were appointed to act in his name, and bore the credentials of his authority : 20. "We then are ambassadors (πρεσβευομεν, we execute the office of ambassadors,) for Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, (ὕπὲρ Χριστοῦ) be ye reconciled unto God." The apostles, though persecuted, despised, and derided by the world, were the envoys of the prince of peace to his rebellious subjects. Speaking in his name, and representing his person, the divine Saviour might be considered as directly addressing men; it was the same as if God did beseech, when *they* spoke : And what was the purport of their message? It was, to entreat men, *on behalf of Christ*, to lay aside the wea-

pons of their rebellion, and to be *reconciled to God*. What astonishing condescension! What ineffable grace! Ambassadors are generally sent from one sovereign prince to another; here they are sent to rebellious subjects by their King. They usually speak in terms of *equality*; here they *beseech* with affectionate importunity: Other ambassadors demand satisfaction, or threaten war; here all claims on the part of God are waived, and reconciliation is earnestly recommended to those who had offended without cause. Those who send ambassadors to human states, have generally an interest to avert an open rupture: but the Eternal King has nothing to fear from the attempts of feeble mortals. In the former case, the message is sent from one creature to another: In *this*, the overture is made by the Great Creator to worms of the dust. How joyfully should we comply with the gracious invitation! how ungrateful, how dangerous must it be to reject it!—The expression, “be ye reconciled,” does not imply that man has any just reason to be offended with God. The same form of expression is used where the *offending* party is clearly addressed, Matt. v. 23, 24. “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother *hath ought against thee*, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first *be reconciled to thy brother* (*διαλλαγήν τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου*), and then come and offer thy gift.” Here the party justly offended is the first to make overtures of peace; every obstacle on *his* part is removed, and we are simply required to lay aside our *unreasonable* enmity, and to enter into friendship with God. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he would turn from his evil ways and live, (Ezek. xviii. 23.) he is unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, (2 Pet. iii. 9.) It has been observed, that in our version the pronoun *you* is improperly supplied in the 20th verse. The Corinthians had already embraced the offers of mercy, and were in a state of reconciliation; but the Apostle informs us in what manner he addressed his fellow-men in *every place*. Dr M’Knight, on the passage, represents Christ as God’s chief ambassador, and the apostles as his substitutes; but the substitute of an ambassador is a very unusual expression, and the Apostle speaks of himself, as immediately commissioned from God, as representing the person, not of a *delegate*, but of a *sovereign prince*: but it is worthy of notice, that the titles *God* and *Christ*, are used interchangeably in this passage, as equal-

ly applicable to our Saviour; and such incidental testimonies to his proper deity, are peculiarly valuable. The title of ambassador is often improperly applied to ordinary preachers of the Gospel. It is true, in so far as they deliver the apostolic message, they are entitled to regard, and their doctrine cannot be rejected without guilt; but no one can now pretend to a divine commission, such as the apostles possessed, or produce the same credentials on which they founded their claim of being ambassadors for Christ. The duty of ordinary ministers is to explain and enforce *their* message. When Paul says that when he preached, it was "as if God besought by him," it shews how conscious he was of speaking by inspiration.

The ground on which reconciliation is offered, is now set before us, viz. the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ. 21. "For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin (*ἁμαρτία*) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here the *character of Christ* is described, for there can be no doubt that he is the subject of the proposition, "he knew no sin;" not only was he free from actual guilt, but he never even conceived a sinful purpose or desire. The same character is given of him, 1 Pet. ii. 22. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." So in Heb. vii. 26. he is represented as "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." And the beloved Apostle confirms the same truth, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin," (1 John iii. 5.) By his miraculous conception he was free from the taint of original sin; hence he was called by the angel who announced his conception to the virgin "το ἅγιον γέννημα, that holy progeny." (Luke i. 35.) He could not be charged with actual transgression; he could ask his greatest enemies, "which of you convicteth (*ἐλεγχου*) me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) In allusion to his moral purity, he is called a "lamb without blemish and without spot," (1 Pet. i. 19.) The sacrificial victims under the law were required to be without blemish, (Lev. i. 3., &c.) In this they prefigured the perfection of the Lamb of God, "which taketh away the sin of the world." *2dly*, Our attention is directed to the *substitution* of Christ in the room of guilty men: "He hath made him to be sin for us;" the word *ἁμαρτία* is frequently used by the LXX to signify a sin-offering, (Lev. iv. 21. v. 9., &c.), and sometimes the Hebrew word חטאת, is used both for sin and for a

sin-offering. The reason is, that the sin of the *offerer* was emblematically transferred to the victim, by the laying on of his hands, (Lev. iv. 4. xvi. 21.), and the sacrifice was consequently viewed as bearing the iniquity of the people. In the same manner, the sins of men are represented as imputed to our blessed Saviour; "he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities,—and Jehovah laid upon him the iniquity of us all," (Isa. liii. 5, 6.) So the Apostle Peter declares, "he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree," (1 Epis. ii. 24.) and in another place, (chap. iii. 18.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." This truth is proved by a variety of arguments, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the virtue of Christ's sacrifice is contrasted with the comparative inefficacy of the legal offerings; nor can it be objected that the substitution of Christ was contrary to justice; for he had power to lay down his life; and he voluntarily came "to give his life a ransom for many." He did not cease to be *personally* righteous by becoming our surety, but he was viewed as legally responsible for our sins. It has been said, that moral actions cannot be transferred: this is admitted, so far as their intrinsic qualities are concerned; and therefore we do not approve of those expressions which represent our Saviour as being morally guilty; but the *consequences* of our sins were imputed to him, so that he endured the curse and suffered the penalty. And as our sins were transferred to him, so his obedience is reckoned to our account, which is the third thing mentioned in the text, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." In ourselves we are guilty and polluted in the sight of God; but *in him* we are treated as righteous; we are invested with "the righteousness of God;" not only a godlike righteousness, but a righteousness of his appointment and acceptance, a righteousness wrought out by him who is, in his divine nature, truly and essentially God. The Apostle does not merely say, that we might be constituted righteous, but righteousness *itself*; yea, *the righteousness of God*. Every circumstance is introduced into this passage, which might render the contrast more obvious and striking. He who knew no sin, is contrasted with the rebellious sons of men; *our* sins are imputed to him, and *his* righteousness to us; thus he was made sin, that we might be made righteous.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Have we been born from above? are our desires and aversions, our joys and sorrows, become new? Has the stony heart been taken away, and have we received an heart of flesh? All these effects are the work of God. To bring about this blessed reconciliation, he gave up his only begotten Son, he who was infinitely holy, appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; he tabernacled among the sinful children of men; he was made an offering for sin, that pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, might be conveyed to us. The discovery of this truth ought to excite our gratitude, and to melt and subdue our hearts. While we look on him whom we have pierced, while we contemplate the love of God in Christ Jesus, let all our fears remove, let all our former enmity give way to reverence and love.

2. How universal is the rebellion of men against their Maker! Observation, experience, and history, all unite to prove that we are by nature the children of disobedience. It is not one class alone that requires to be reconciled, but a *world*. But extensive as our guilt is, the divine mercy is equally diffusive, and the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Why should we hesitate to embrace the overtures of pardon? Every difficulty is removed, all things are prepared for our reception. The ambassadors of Christ still address us in their writings, praying us to be reconciled to God. Inferior ministers are engaged in the same enterprise. God waiteth to be gracious, and "there is joy in heaven among the holy angels over one sinner that repenteth."

CHAPTER SIXTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—10.

PAUL'S FAITHFULNESS IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS MINISTRY.

THE Apostle had represented himself, and his brethren in office, as ambassadors for Christ, whose duty it was to shew unto men the way of salvation. In the execution of this ministry, he besought both Jew and Gentile to be reconciled to God. He had too much reason, however, to fear that even some in the Corinthian church required to be reconciled, and were yet in a state of alienation from God, at least they were in danger of losing all benefit from the act of amnesty; and he therefore warns them not to abuse the valuable privileges which had been bestowed on them through the ministry of Christ's servants. 1. "We then, as fellow-labourers (*συνεργοί*), beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain, (*ὡς ἄνω*)."
 It was to no purpose that the invitations and promises of the Gospel were addressed to them, if they continued to indulge a worldly, self-righteous, or contentious spirit. This would render the gift of God ineffectual, and would greatly aggravate their guilt. Some make a distinction between common and special grace, the latter peculiar to the converted, and the former supposed to be bestowed on all who hear the Gospel, which, if improved, will be made effectual to their salvation. But the word *χάρις*, *grace*, is used in a great variety of senses in the sacred Scriptures; and in this passage it may signify the privilege of hearing the Gospel preached. The words "with him," are, in our version, unnecessarily supplied. It is true that the apostles were instruments in the hand of God; but it seems to place them too much on a level with the Deity, to represent them as fellow-workmen *with him*. In the 1st Epis. 3d chap. and 9th verse, the expression, *ὡς*

συνεργῶν, evidently means, fellow-workers *under* God, or employed by him. Paul may here include Timothy, Titus, and his other partners in the ministry. It is thought by some, he addresses in this verse the *pastors* of the Corinthian church, and by the grace or gift of God which they had received, he means the office of the ministry. It is accordingly translated by M'Knight, "Now, fellow-labourers, we also beseech you, &c.;" but there seems no reason for thus restricting the application, nor would the word *συνεργῶν* have been employed, but rather *συνεργῶν*. But the passage certainly implies, that both teachers and private christians are in danger of losing all benefit from the Gospel, by their careless and inconsistent conduct.

2. It was the more necessary to give this warning, as it might be proved from the testimony of Scripture that there is only a certain season allowed for securing the salvation of the soul. Thus in Isaiah xlix. 8. where the Messiah is represented as interceding for the salvation of the Gentiles, Jehovah addresses his beloved Son, in language which implies that the period of acceptance is restricted to certain limits. In declaring his gracious intention of granting his request, "He saith, In an accepted season (*καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ*) I have heard thee, and in a day of salvation I have helped thee." If this were the case, even with respect to the Messiah, how much more does it behove believers *in general* to improve the day of grace? Now the acceptable season, to which the prophet alludes, was in fact enjoyed by the Corinthian converts; "behold, now is the highly accepted season (*ἡ ἀποδεκτή καιρὸς*), behold, now is the day of salvation!" With regard to those who hear the Gospel, it may be truly said, that the present moment is all that they can call their own. We know not what a day may bring forth; "to us to-morrow's sun may never rise." We may be deprived of the means of grace; we may justly be given up to a reprobate mind; those reasoning faculties which we have abused may be deranged, and the lamp of knowledge quenched for ever; "therefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'" "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest," (Heb. iii. 7, 8. Eccles. ix. 10.)

In the discharge of their ministry, it was the constant care of the apostles to avoid every thing that might encourage men in

their sins, or cast a stumbling-block in their way, or which might occasion the sacred office they held, to be evil spoken of: 3. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in every thing establishing (συνιστῶντες) ourselves as the ministers (or servants, διακονοί) of God." They conducted themselves in all respects, both in public and private, with prudence and circumspection, studying to give no offence (or hindrance, πρὸςκοπή) either to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God. They acted in such a manner as to *establish* their character as servants of that God, who unites in himself every possible perfection, and who had chosen them, by his grace, to this honourable employment. The holiness and piety of their lives, no less than the doctrines which they taught, and the miracles which they performed, proved them to be commissioned from Heaven. No other teachers, either among the heathens or Jews, could bear a comparison with them. Indeed, the history of the most eminent philosophers was stained with some defect. The principles and character of these *servants of God* might be known from the spirit with which they endured their various sufferings. They were approved, (4, 5.) "in (or by, ἐν) much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." They manifested the greatest *patience* and forbearance under the many calumnies, insults, and injuries that were heaped upon them; their invincible fortitude, and undaunted perseverance, were conspicuous in the midst of those *troubles* (ἐν θλίψεσιν) which they underwent, both in body and mind, as well from the world, as from false brethren. They were frequently in want even of the necessities of life, and were obliged to submit to the most painful privations (ἐν ἀνάγκαις); they were brought into the greatest *straits* (ἐν ἐνδοχαιμίαις), which seemed to leave them no means of escape, and no power of resistance. The vilest indignities were also heaped upon them. They were scourged (ἐν πληγαῖς) like common felons, or as the meanest slaves, (chap. xi. 24. Acts xvi. 23.) They were deprived of their liberty, and shut up in the common prisons (ἐν φυλακαῖς) without having done any thing worthy of bonds. The most shameful riots (ἐν ἀκαταστάσεσιν) were often excited by the infuriated populace on their account, in which their life was in imminent danger, (Acts xix. 29.; xxiii. 10., &c.) They were called

to sustain the most arduous and exhausting labours (*ἐν ποσὶς*), partly in travelling and preaching from place to place, and partly from being obliged to work for their own maintenance. They were often deprived of rest, (*ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις*), their slumbers being broken with anxiety, or interrupted by violence, (Acts ix. 25.) Sometimes they were without food (*ἐν νηστείαις*), and obliged to fast from mere necessity, independently of those seasons of abstinence which were observed as a religious duty, on account of some particular distress.

6—8. Their character, as servants of God, was further manifested by the holiness and usefulness of their lives, as well as by their sufferings: "By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour (or weapons, *ὅπλα*) of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left." They were distinguished by the *purity* (*ἐν ἀγνότητι*) of their motives, the sobriety and temperance of their lives; by the sublime views which they gave to men of the word and providence of God, as well as by their deep *acquaintance* with human nature, and with the various traits of the christian character; by their meekness, gentleness, and forbearance (*ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ*) under the most injurious and unprovoked treatment; by returning good for evil; avoiding all harsh and irritating language, and shewing gentleness (*χρηστότητι*) towards all men; by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which they confirmed their message, and which they communicated to others; by *sincere affection* (*ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ*) towards the household of faith, and undissembled benevolence towards mankind in general, as opposed to the deceitful flattery of the world; by their undeviating attachment to the pure doctrines of the Gospel, which they preached as the infallible *word of truth* (*ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας*); by the evident exertion of *divine power* (*ἐν δυνάμει Θεοῦ*) which accompanied their labours, and which both supported their minds in trouble, and rendered their preaching effectual in the conversion of souls; by the exercise of strict *justice* and integrity, which, like armour of celestial workmanship, (*διὰ ὅπλα ἰσχυρὰ*) defended them on every side against the insidious designs and open attacks of their enemies. Dr M^cKnight translates the words (*ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*) "by a holy or well regulated spirit;" but there seems no occasion for deviating from the usual signification of this expression.

They maintained the same uniform consistency of character in the most opposite circumstances, "Through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report:" They displayed their wonted humility, when treated with divine honours at Lystra, (Acts xiv. 11—13); nor did their courage fail them when, at Philippi, they were scourged, and thrust into the common prison, (chap. xvi. 23, 24.) They had learned to bear both the smiles and the frowns of the world; they never swerved from the path of duty, whether assailed by calumny, or crowned with applause.

9, 10. They united in themselves the most singular contrasts and apparent contradictions. They were viewed in a very different light by various descriptions of men: "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." By the men of the world they were considered as artful imposters (ὡς πλανῶν), who sought to advance their own interests by cunningly devised fables; yet they were honest and faithful men (ἀληθεῖς) who spoke the words of truth and soberness, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. By the proud and ambitious, they were despised as obscure illiterate fanatics (ὡς ἀγνοῦμενοι), of whose character and doctrine they affected entire ignorance or utter contempt: Yet they were precious in the sight of God; and they were well known (ἐπιγινώσκουσιν) and highly esteemed by thousands, who had been converted by their ministry, and could attest the excellence of their character. They were so much exposed to dangers of every kind, that their life seemed a constant miracle, and every day the church might expect to hear of their death (ὡς ἀποθνήσκουσιν); yet, by the help of God, their life was preserved; and they were enabled, contrary to the expectation of their enemies, to continue their labours (ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν); they were severely chastened or disciplined (παιδευόμενοι), both by the visitations of Providence and by the malice of men; but they were not given over unto death, (Ps. cxviii. 18.) Their hearts were pierced with many sorrows (λειτουργίαι) from a variety of causes; yet in the midst of all, they were enabled to rejoice in the love of God, in the testimony of a good conscience, and in the hope of eternal glory, (Rom. v. 3. Acts xvi. 25.) They had but a small share of this world's good things,

and were placed in very poor and dependant circumstances, (*πτωχοί*), but they *enriched* (*πλουτιζοῦσι*) thousands with the knowledge of that Gospel which is more precious than gold. They *had nothing* but what bare necessity required (*ὡς μόνον ἔχοντες*); yet, in the enjoyment of the divine favour, in the forgiveness of sins, in the gift of a Saviour, and in the great and precious promises of the word of God, they *had all things* necessary for life and godliness: "the world, and life, and death, and things present, and things to come—all were theirs," (chap. i. 3—5. 1 Epis. iii. 21—23.) The liveliness, beauty, and sublimity of this passage have been much admired.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared to us. We are exalted to heaven in point of privilege. Let us beware lest, by our abuse of the divine goodness, we be thrust down to hell. What will it avail us to say, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets? If we have not turned from our evil ways, we must have our place with the workers of iniquity. The day of salvation is fast drawing to a close; the Spirit of God will not always strive with men. Let us attend to the things that belong to our peace; ere they be hid from our eyes. "Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation!" Beyond the grave, our state is fixed for ever; and when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, then in vain shall we stand without, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us: he shall answer and say unto us, "I know you not whence ye are," (Luke xiii. 25.)

2. What a fine example is here set before the preachers of the Gospel! How careful should they be to give no offence in any thing which might bring reproach on the ministry. It is the cause of religion that suffers by the misconduct of its ministers; for men will not give themselves the trouble to distinguish between the true nature of the sacred office, and the abuse of it by ambitious and worldly men. Blessed be God, we are not called to prove our sincerity by stripes or imprisonments, by tumults or by labours. But it is the more necessary that we establish our character by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kind-

ness, by love unfeigned. We must hold fast the word of truth ; we must rely on the power of God ; we must gird on the armour of righteousness ; we must conscientiously discharge our duty through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, whatever estimate may be made of our character or motives.

3. The christian's life is full of paradoxes. He is treated as a *deceiver*, when he seeks to bring others to the knowledge of the truth ; he is often *unknown* to the world, and makes no figure in the annals of ambition or fame ; he keeps aloof from the din of politics, from the scenes of gaiety and fashion, from the keen pursuit of gain ; and he seeks communion with God in the retirement of the closet, and in the ordinances of His house ; but he is *well known* to his heavenly Father, and shall be acknowledged by his approving Judge before an assembled world ; he is *dead* to sin and to the world, but he *lives* to God ; he is not exempt from the calamities of life, but he is "chastened by the Lord, that he may not be condemned with the wicked." He *mourns* under a sense of sin, and under the hidings of his Father's face ; but he *rejoices* in the grace of the Lord Jesus, whose love and pity are ever the same. He is often *poor* in this world, but he is *rich* in faith, and enriches others by his holy and edifying conversation ; he has *nothing* of his own in which to glory, but he has learned in every state therewith to be content ; and he possesses *every thing* in Christ, who is made unto him, of God, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 11—18.

THE DUTY OF SEPARATING FROM UNBELIEVERS.

THE Apostle had alluded to the various trials and discouragements which he met with in the discharge of his ministry, and had proved his character, as an ambassador of Christ, by a reference to the holy principles by which he was actuated. In doing so, he had given free utterance to the feelings of his affectionate mind, and had unbosomed all his joys and sorrows to his

beloved friends at Corinth. 11. "O Corinthians, our mouth is opened (*ἠνεῴχθη*, perf.) unto you; our heart is enlarged, (*ἡ καρδία μου ἐκτεταταῖ*, has been enlarged)." Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth had spoken; and they might easily be convinced, not only from what he had said, but from the whole tenor of his conduct, of his unfeigned regard towards them: they had no reason to doubt of his readiness to afford them every proof of christian love which they could desire; he was willing to impart, not only the Gospel, but also his own life, because they were dear to him. Therefore, if they complained of any apparent severity in his manners, of any want of affection on his part;—if they did not experience the same enlargement of soul in meditating on the truths which he had taught them, the fault was in themselves, and not in him. 12. "Ye are not straitened (*στυννοχρησθε*) in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." Pride, prejudice, the love of the world, and a spirit of strife had *shut up* their hearts, had marred their comfort, and prevented their enjoying the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. These unhappy dispositions likewise hindered, in their minds, the natural flow of affectionate sympathy towards him and his fellow-labourers. He asked no remuneration for his services. The only reward which he desired was, a *return* of the same love, on their part, which he was conscious he entertained towards them; and in saying this he addressed them with all the tenderness of a *parent* consulting the best interests of his family. Let them, therefore, lay aside their ungenerous suspicions, and not suffer the insinuations of designing men to warp their judgment. 13. "Now for a recompense of the same kind (*τῆν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν*), I speak as unto children, be ye also enlarged."

One great cause of their present disorders was, their improper conformity to the world; and therefore he would affectionately warn them to flee from every scene of temptation and danger: he would particularly caution them against forming unsuitable connections with persons destitute of true piety. 14—16. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers (*ἰσὺν ἄπιστοις*); for what fellowship hath righteousness with wickedness (*ἀνομία*), and what communion (*κοινωνία*) hath light with darkness? and what concord (*συμφωνία*, symphony) hath Christ with Belial (or Satan)? or what part (*μερίς*, lot or portion) hath he that believeth with an unbeliever (*ἄπιστον*)? and what agreement hath the temple of God

with (that of) idols (*μετα ειδωλων*)? for ye are the temple of the living God," &c. In the former part of this passage, there is an allusion to that precept of the Mosaic law which forbids animals of different kinds to be yoked together in the same plough, and which is here shewn to have a moral meaning, Deut. xxii. 10. "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together."

Various are the views which have been given of the words in the text; and it becomes us seriously to enquire into the design of the Apostle, and to consider how far the exhortation is applicable to us, in the present day. In the first place, it is readily admitted, that the word *απιστες*, *unbeliever*, signifies an idolatrous Gentile, and is so used, 1 Epistle, chap. x. 27., and in other places; and in this sense the passage may be considered as containing a recapitulation of those directions respecting the eating of idol sacrifices, and feasting in a heathen temple, which the Apostle had given at greater length in his first letter (chaps. viii. and x.) It was their duty to have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness. Yet it does not seem probable that he should again revert to a subject which he had before so fully discussed. By others, therefore, the passage has been viewed, 2dly, As a prohibition against forming *marriages* with unbelievers; and according to this sentiment, the word *απιστες* is used in a more extensive sense, as applying to all who are destitute of true faith. This is certainly a most important subject, and one which is undeniably referred to, 1 Epis. vii. 39. It is also a precept which is very frequently disregarded, or overlooked, by young persons professing christianity. Nay, some who argue strongly for purity of communion in the church, seem to make an exception here, on the ground that the marriage relation is entirely a civil compact! It is not difficult to assign the causes of this neglect. Sordid views of self interest, lead some into such marriages, for the sake of wealth. The force of passion influences others, who do not reflect that in this, and in all other things inconsistent with his Lord's will, a christian is bound to deny himself. The hope of being useful to the unbeliever, is the reason assigned by others,—an expectation which is seldom or never realized. Mere inattention to the scriptural rule, we may charitably hope, induces others to form such connections, who have never examined the subject; but such inattention is inexcusable, with relation to a

point which is so intimately connected with their temporal and spiritual welfare. How many evils arise from this practice! We naturally and insensibly imbibe the spirit, and copy the manners, of those with whom we associate, and are ever disposed to palliate the faults of those we love. Such connections involve the christian in many powerful temptations. He must necessarily mingle in the society of those whose views and pursuits are of a character entirely opposite to his own. His plans of benevolence are paralyzed—his opportunities of religious improvement are lessened. Family-worship can hardly be maintained. His religious sentiments are derided as enthusiastic. His endeavours to train up his children in the fear of God, are counteracted by the example and instructions of his unbelieving partner. The fear of being separated for ever from the object of his affection, must awaken the most painful anxiety in his mind. He deliberately places his regard on one who is in a state of alienation from God, and forms the closest intimacy with one of those from whom he is commanded to *withdraw*. Instead of a help meet for him in his christian warfare, an unbelieving woman will prove a snare to his soul. Many have apostatized from the faith, from this cause. Others, who have maintained their integrity, have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Neither wealth, nor beauty, nor even mental accomplishments, should decide the christian's choice, but undoubted evidence of genuine piety. The word of God is full of warnings against such unequal marriages; and the severest judgments there recorded, have been inflicted on that account. These remarks refer, of course, only to marriages deliberately formed with unbelievers. Where the parties are already united, the converted partner may expect the aid of divine grace to overcome the dangers of his situation. It has been observed, however, that some expressions in this passage are hardly applicable to the marriage relation. The exhortation in the 17th ver. "Come out from among them, and be separate," if applied to this connection, is not reconcilable with the apostolic advice in 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13, where the believing husband or wife is required to continue, if possible, with the unbeliever. The subject of marriage is not mentioned in the context, and there is nothing in the Apostle's language that can restrict the prohibition to this point. This is well illustrated by the late Dr Dwight, in a sermon on this passage. (*Theology*, Ser. 149.)

Sdly, The Apostle has been thought to forbid unnecessary intercourse with unbelievers, in ordinary life. We must not choose them as our companions, or frequent their assemblies of gaiety and pleasure. The theatre, the ball-room, and the card-table, have always been found unfavourable to the cultivation of that habitual seriousness and sobriety of mind which ought to characterize the disciples of Christ. We are told that the friendship of this world is enmity with God, (James iv. 4.) We are enjoined not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed in the renewing of our mind, (Rom. xii. 2.) We are exhorted, "as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul," (1 Pet. ii. 11.) We are reminded, that "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," (1 John ii. 16.) The conversation, the maxims, the practice, and spirit of worldly men, must be uncongenial to a renewed mind. With respect, however, to *civil intercourse* with society, we are not required to come out from unbelievers. On the contrary, the Apostle elsewhere corrects the views of the Corinthians on this subject, (1 Epis. v. 9, 10.) on the ground, that in that case we must needs go out of the world: and therefore I observe,

4thly, That the passage seems to forbid Christians to be united in church-fellowship, with those who are destitute of true piety. Here, I am aware, that the contrary practice is vindicated by many excellent individuals; nor do I mean to say, that any church on earth is entirely made up of regenerate persons. It is only by outward appearances, that we can judge of a religious profession. The word *excommunicatus*, in the 15th verse, is unnecessarily translated *infidel*, which, to an English ear, conveys the idea of a person who denies the divine authority of the Scriptures; but this word has a much more extensive meaning in the New Testament, and is properly rendered *unbelievers* in the 14th verse. In other places, it is translated *disobedient*, *unfaithful*, and is applied to those who *profess to know God*, while in works they deny him, (Titus i. 15, 16.) Hence it properly signifies one who is destitute of true faith, and who does not practically obey the Gospel. This is admitted by those who hold the second view above mentioned. With persons of this description, believers are not to be yoked together, in the observance of reli-

gious ordinances. This is agreeable to what is taught in other places; 1 Epist. v. 11—13. 2 Thess. iii. 6. 2 Tim. iii. 5. As is observed by Dr Dwight, the whole context supposes, that a church of Christ should consist of believers *only*. The persons to whom the exhortation is addressed, are considered *as such*. Heathens and infidels form one class of unbelievers; but all other classes are included in this prohibition. If we are forbidden to hold unnecessary intercourse with the unregenerate, in civil affairs, or to form alliances with them by marriage, it is more incumbent on us to abstain from *religious communion* with them. The Apostle asks, "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" He argues against the *incongruity* of such an union. A true christian is as opposite to an unbeliever, as righteousness is to unrighteousness—as light is to darkness—as Christ is to Belial, or the living God to dumb idols. There can be no adherence between substances of different tendencies; nor can there be any communion between persons of opposite characters and principles. Their views, their aims, their interests, their pursuits, and pleasures, are all different. An unbeliever is an unrighteous person, living in spiritual *darkness*—under the dominion of Satan—a practical idolater, (Ephes. v. 5.) A christian is a righteous person; he walks in the light—he is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son—he has turned from all idolatrous attachments, to serve the living God. An union between such persons, is subversive of the design of church-fellowship, which is to present to the world a living picture of true Christianity, and of the nature of social religion: It prevents the execution of the laws of Christ; it deceives the souls of men; it confirms the prejudices of those who reject the Gospel. No plea of expediency—no hope of greater usefulness—no dread of schism—no regard to respectability in life, can authorize its continuance. To associate with unbelievers in church communion, is to defile the temple of God: 16. "What agreement (*συγκαταβολή*, placing together) hath the temple of God with idols?" Here is an evident allusion to the history of Dagon falling before the ark, (1 Sam. v. 2—4.) The temple of God and the temples of idolatry cannot stand together. The nature of the worship, and the character of the votaries are diametrically opposite. Now the temple of God is his church; "for ye are the temple

of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in (or among, *συναγαγὼν*) them, and walk in them ; (*ἐγκαταστήσω*), and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The Apostle had before shewn the Corinthians, in his first Epistle, (chap. iii. 16, 17. and vi. 19.) that they, both as a church and as individuals, were built up, as lively stones,—a spiritual house,—for an habitation of God through the Spirit ; and all the ordinances of worship declare, that "holiness becomes his house for ever." Of this privilege he now reminds them ; and he confirms the observation, by a reference to what is said of the divine presence with ancient Israel, in Leviticus xxvi. 11, 12. "I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." The same promise is made Jer. xxxii. 38. and in other passages. Such being the high honour conferred upon the church, a corresponding separation from every thing impure is required of its members : "17, 18. Wherefore, come ye out (*ἐξέλθῃτε*) from the midst of them, and be separated, (*ἀφορίσθητε*) saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing (or person, *ἀκαθάρτου*), and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The 17th verse is a quotation from Isaiah lii. 11., where Jehovah commands the captive Jews to depart from Babylon, and not to touch any thing in that idolatrous and devoted city. It was especially incumbent on the priests and Levites, who bore the sacred vessels of the Lord, that they should keep themselves pure. In the same manner, it is the duty of christians, who are consecrated as a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, to withdraw from the pollutions of the world. In another place, (Jer. li. 6.) the people of God are commanded to flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver their own souls ; and a similar exhortation is addressed to the faithful, with reference to the mystical Babylon, or antichristian church, Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." In short, it is the duty of christian churches to put away from them all wicked persons (1 Epia. v. 13.) ; and where this is impracticable, to "come out from among them," and preserve the purity of Christ's house. This is the express commandment of the *Almighty Lord*, who, in that case, promises that he will receive the obedient under his protection,—that he will manifest towards them the tenderness of a *parent*, and will bestow upon

them all the privileges and honours of his adopted *children*. Thus every loss which we may have sustained, every sacrifice which we have made, will be amply compensated; all reproach and ridicule shall finally be taken away, (Isa. xxv. 8.) though father and mother forsake us, the Lord will take us up; though the men of the world should say all manner of evil against us falsely for the Son of Man's sake, God will be our refuge and our strength—he will confess our names before the angels of heaven—he will exalt us to his blissful seat, and admit us to his immediate presence. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!—beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is,” (1 John iii. 1, 2.) The expression “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you,” seems rather the sense of many passages of Scripture; than the words of any particular promise. In 2 Sam. vii. 14. these words are spoken of the Messiah, as explained Heb. i. 5.; and viewing him as the Head of the redeemed family, the first-born among many brethren, they may be considered as describing the common privilege of all its members; but in many places, Jehovah is represented under the endearing character of a Father; and perhaps it is not straining the Apostle's words to suppose, that, speaking by *inspiration*, he here adopts the style of the ancient prophets, who, in declaring the will of Heaven, introduced their solemn admonitions with the authoritative words, “Thus saith the Lord.”

We have considered this passage as forbidding religious communion with persons destitute of true faith; and there is ample evidence that the primitive church, during the first three centuries, took great pains to maintain the exercise of a wholesome discipline over its members, and to separate the unholy and profane from a participation of church privileges. Thus Origen, (as quoted by Lord Chancellor King, in his learned Treatise on the constitution of the ancient church,) observes, “We do our utmost that our assemblies be composed of good and wise men:” so that “none who are admitted to our congregations and prayers are vicious and wicked, except very rarely it may happen that a particular bad man may be concealed in so great a number;” and after enumerating the chief offences which called for the censure

of the church, the learned author remarks, " Nay, the good and holy men of those days were so zealous against sin, that they used the strictest severities against the least appearances of it, not indulging or sparing the least branch of its pestiferous production, but smartly punishing the least sprout of it, its lesser acts, as well as those that were more scandalous and notorious," &c. (Pages 138, 154. Edit. 1691.) The parable of the Tares, (Matt. xiii. 24—43.) has been urged as *permitting* communion with unbelievers; where it is said, " Let both grow together until the harvest ;" but this would prove too much, for according to this view, there could be no pretence for excommunicating unworthy persons in *any* case, which is a doctrine disavowed by every church. The parable represents the condition of men in civil life, where good and bad are connected by natural ties, and where the latter are spared for the sake of the former. " The field is the world," says our Saviour. It also shews the folly and wickedness of *persecution*, under pretence of preserving the purity of the church. Even allowing that church-communion is intended, it would only prove, that it belongs to the Searcher of hearts to make a *thorough* separation between the righteous and the wicked, at that day when " he shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire," (verses 41, 42.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Do we complain that we feel no enlargement of affection in the ways of God? We ask those who are called " the house of Jacob, Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings, do not his words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" (Micah ii. 7.) " The Lord's hand is not shortened that He cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that He cannot hear, but our iniquities have separated between us and our God, and our sins have hid his face from us," (Isa. lix. 1, 2.) " Open thy mouth wide, (he says,) and I will fill it:" " Prove me now, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Ps. lxxxi. 10. Mal. iii. 10.)
2. There is a broad line of distinction drawn between the children of God and the children of the devil. They are possessed of the same common nature, but the former have been brought

out of darkness into marvellous light; they have renounced the pomps and vanities of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the service of Satan. They walk in the paths of righteousness; and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They enjoy the presence of their heavenly Father. He dwells in their hearts by his Spirit; he consecrates their bodies as his living temple; he gives them the privilege of access to the throne of grace, and when he corrects them, it is for their profit, that they may be made partakers of His holiness. Let them walk worthy of their high calling: Let them do all things without murmuring and disputing: that they may be blameless and harmless, "the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world," (Phil. ii. 14, 15.)

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—9.

PAUL COMFORTED BY THE REPENTANCE OF THE CORINTHIANS.

THE Apostle had exhorted the church at Corinth to have no fellowship with unbelievers; and as a powerful argument to enforce compliance, had referred to those passages of Scripture, in which the privilege of adoption is promised to those who should keep themselves unspotted from the world. He now mentions the *improvement* which ought to be made of this subject. 1. "Having therefore these promises, beloved (*αγαπῆται*), let us purify ourselves from all pollution (*μολυσμῶν*) of the flesh and spirit, perfecting (*ἁγιασμοῖς*) holiness in the fear of God." It has been observed, that this verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter. The high honour to which christians are advanced, as sons

and daughters of the Lord Almighty, should stimulate them to walk worthy of their heavenly calling, and to act suitably to their new character, as His adopted children. Such great and precious promises are not given with a view to encourage sloth, or to foster presumption and pride, but to awaken gratitude, to promote love, and to lead the christian to aspire after universal holiness. Thus, in addressing the saints at Rome, the Apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," (chap. xii. 1.) And the beloved apostle, after noticing the love of God in calling us his children, adds, "And every man that hath this hope in *him* purifieth himself, even as *he* is pure," (1 Epis. iii. 3.) This is agreeable to what is said by the Psalmist, (cxxx. 4.) "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." The goodness of God is designed "to lead us to repentance." The Apostle, therefore, exhorts his beloved friends at Corinth, to *purify themselves from all defilement, both of body and mind*. They must renounce the sinful and polluting pleasures of the world. They must keep their *bodies* pure, by abstaining from all sensuality and intemperance, which entail disease and misery on the human race, and reduce men to the level of the beasts that perish; and they must guard against the first motions of sin *within them*, by watching against polluting imaginations, vain and idle thoughts, inordinate love of the world, pride, ambition, anger, malice and envy. Sins of the *heart* are seldom viewed as displeasing to God, and yet they are expressly forbidden by our Saviour, (Matt. v. 28.) as well as condemned by the moral law, (Rom. vii. 7.) and they generally issue in open acts of wickedness; "for when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," (James i. 15.) These sinful emotions must grieve the Holy Spirit, and render us vile in the sight of a heart-searching God, (Matt. xv. 19, 20.) They are also inconsistent with the exercise of holy and spiritual affections; "for to be carnally minded is death," (Rom. viii. 6.) Hence the wisdom and importance of the admonition of the wise man, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," (Prov. iv. 23.); and hence the propriety of that petition, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," (Ps. xix. 12.) According to this rule, christians are to aim at nothing short of perfect con-

formity to the will of God. Their highest attainments cannot reach the full standard of the divine law ; and therefore they require still to press forward to the things that are before, striving to be *perfect*, even as their Father who is in heaven is perfect : And the great means of attaining to this purity of mind, of perfecting ourselves in holiness, is *by the fear of God* (*ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ*), by which we are to understand, not a slavish dread, but a filial reverence of his authority,—a holy fear of incurring his displeasure,—a realising sense of his presence, and a habitual regard to the account which we must render to Him. This fear he has promised to put into our hearts, (Jer. xxxii. 40.)

The Apostle now returns from the digression which he had made, to the main subject of his letter. In chap. ii. 12, 13. he had mentioned the anxiety of mind which he had suffered from not hearing of the return of Titus from Corinth ; to this point he now reverts, after he had explained the general character and success of his ministry. 2. "Receive us. We have injured no man : we have corrupted no man : we have defrauded no man." He begs them, in an animated style, to *admit* him again to a place in their affections (*χρησται*), and to submit to his authority as their spiritual father, and an accredited ambassador of Christ. They had no reason to act otherwise, for he was not conscious of having given any of them a just cause of offence. He had *injured* (*ἀδικήσωμεν*) no man in his character or reputation ; and his faithful reproofs were intended for their good : He had not *corrupted* (*σφθάρωμεν*) the principles or the morals of any, either by his doctrine or by his example : He had coveted (*ἐπὶ λωβῇ ἐκτησάμεν*) no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, as the false teachers generally did ; nor had he *made a gain of them*, by deceiving their souls with erroneous doctrine, for the sake of advancing his temporal interest : Like Samuel, the venerable judge of Israel, he could ask, "whom have I defrauded, or whom have I oppressed, or of whose hand have I received a bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith?" (1 Sam. xii. 3. Numb. xvi. 15.) When he mentioned these things, he did not mean to insinuate, that they were disposed to bring these charges against him, though he could not but regret that they should permit others to injure *them* in this manner. 3. "I speak not to condemn (you) (*πρὸς κατακρίσιν*, for condemnation), for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and to live with (you)." They must not suppose from any

thing that he hath said, that his affections were cooled, or that he considered them his enemies; for he had already assured them of his love, and he would not retract what he had said before, (chap. vi. 11.) that he would gladly spend his life in their service, did not more pressing duties occupy his attention in other places, and constrain him to be absent from them. He could say to them, as Ruth did to her mother-in-law; "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me," (Ruth i. 16, 17.) This is the natural language of affection: Thus Thomas expressed his love to the Saviour in similar terms, "Let us also go, that we may die with him," (John xi. 16.) The members of the Corinthian church were so dear to him, that they might be said to be in *his heart*; their names were written there in indelible characters; it was so enlarged with love to them as to include them all.

They might judge of his affection, by the *freedom* which he used in pointing out their faults, and by the terms in which he spoke of them to others: 4. "Great is my boldness of speech (*παρρησία*) towards you; great is my boasting concerning you. I am filled with comfort; I abound in joy in all our affliction." So high was the opinion which he had always entertained of their christian character, confirmed as it now was, by the readiness which they had shewn to correct abuses, that he could not help *boasting* of them to others, and holding them up to their brethren, as an example of love and obedience. The Spirit which they had lately displayed, was particularly gratifying to him, in his present *trying circumstances*; his mind was *filled* with consolation; and, in the midst of all his distresses, his joy *abounded even to overflowing*, (*ὑπερῴον*). Thus the memory of his heavy and complicated troubles was almost obliterated. There is a remarkable beauty in the compound word here employed.

Being disappointed of meeting Titus in Troas, the Apostle had gone forward to Macedonia, in hopes of finding him there. But not receiving any intelligence respecting him, he was in great perplexity. 5. "For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side (*ἐν παντί*, in every way); without were fightings (*μαχαι*), within fears." He was apprehensive that the Corinthians had greatly resented his let-

ter, and had refused to submit to the directions of Titus, or even to receive him in peace; and this, added to his outward troubles from the world, seemed ready to crush his feeble frame, and to leave him no means of escape. He could easily bear external difficulties, but the *inward conflicts* which were produced in his mind, by his concern for the welfare of the churches, were far more difficult to sustain. From this state of anxiety, he had been happily relieved by the kind interposition of Him, whose prerogative it is to revive the spirit of the *lowly*, and to cheer the heart of the contrite ones, (Ps. cxv. 14. Isa. lvii. 15.) 6. "But God, who comforteth those who are cast down (*σοφ. ταπεινους*, the humble,) comforted us by the coming of Titus." He could not forbear marking the goodness of God in sending his beloved brother to encourage him, at the time of his heaviest distress, and when his hopes respecting the reformation of the church at Corinth were beginning to fail. But the presence of Titus was not his *sole* comfort. He had not only the pleasure of seeing a valuable friend and companion restored in safety, but he shared in the consolation which that benevolent servant of Christ experienced in witnessing the happy turn of affairs in that church; 7. "And not by *his* coming only, but also by the consolation wherewith he was comforted by you, when he reported to us your earnest desire (*παρακαταειναι*), your mourning (*πενθος*), your zeal (*ζελος*) for me, (*εμε*), so that I rejoiced the more." With lively feelings of gratitude and joy, did that good man declare to his beloved brother Paul, the *fervent longing* of the Corinthians for the Apostle's return, and their earnest desire to comply with his injunctions, and to clear themselves from the suspicions which their previous conduct had excited; he described their sincere regret, and *bitter grief*, at having occasioned so much scandal in the church, and given so much uneasiness to their beloved teacher; he also assured him of their *zeal* for his welfare, and their affectionate wishes to be again favoured with his services. This good news wrought like a charm on the feeling mind of the Apostle, so that, in proportion to the depression of his spirits before the arrival of Titus, was the heart-felt joy which he now experienced.

He was indeed aware, that the sharp reproofs contained in his former epistle, especially relating to the case of the incestuous person, must have been very painful to *them*, as the writing of

the letter had been to *him*, (chap. ii. 4.) Indeed, so fearful was he of giving unnecessary offence, or of counteracting, by undue severity, the good effects which he wished to produce by it, that he *at first* repented or regretted having sent it, lest his design should be misunderstood. But now he saw reason to *rejoice* that he had written it, on account of the favourable manner in which it had been received, and the salutary concern which it had produced in their minds : 8. "For though I made you sorry, (*ἐλπίστε*, I grieved you) by the letter, I do not repent, (*μεταμελομαι*) though I did repent; for I perceive that that epistle grieved you, though but for an hour, (*ὡ καὶ πρὸς ἄραν*)."
 The Apostle wrote by divine inspiration, but he speaks here of his natural feelings as a *man*, which rendered reproof exceedingly painful to him. The *grief* which that letter had occasioned to them, was only *for a short season*, but the good consequences resulting from it, were of a permanent nature, and greatly overbalanced the temporary evil. A tender parent, when obliged to correct his child, may feel a partial regret, but when he witnesses the reformation produced by well regulated discipline, he no longer *repents* of his severity. In the same manner, a physician may regret putting his patient to pain, but he does not *repent* when he sees a cure effected. Paul did not mean to say, that the distress of the Corinthians afforded him any *pleasure*, but he derived satisfaction from the *result* of it, because it issued in a change of mind (*μετενοεῖα*), and in reformation of conduct. 9. "Now I rejoice, not because ye were made sorry, (*ἐλυνθητε*) but because ye sorrowed to repentance: (*ὡς μετανοεῖτε*). For ye sorrowed after a godly manner, (*κατὰ Θεοῦ*, according to God) that ye might sustain loss (*ζημιωθητε*) by us in nothing." Their grief did not arise from shame of detection or reproof; nor did it spring from wounded pride, or from the present inconveniences which their misconduct had occasioned, but from sincere regret that they should have disobeyed the commands of God, brought dishonour on the Gospel, and incurred the divine displeasure. They sorrowed *according to the will of God*. This was the very result for which the Apostle prayed; and therefore, neither by his faithfulness nor apparent severity, would their spiritual interests be at all *damaged* or endangered—nor would it be necessary to inflict any censure on the church.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Do sinful thoughts pollute the mind? Who then can say, I am clean? How hateful must we appear in the sight of a holy and righteous God, while so much defilement cleaves to our flesh and spirit! With what joy should we repair to that fountain which is opened for sin, and how earnestly should we pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me!" Shall we sin because grace abounds? No! Having the great and precious promises of the Gospel, let us rather cleanse ourselves from all pollution, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2. What boldness does a consciousness of integrity impart to the mind! It is especially necessary to the christian minister. Without consistency of character, all his reproofs will be disregarded,—all boldness of speech restrained. He must expect to hear the cutting question, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" On the contrary, how much weight will be added to his instructions, when he can say with the Apostle, "we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." It is painful to censure those with whom we are united in the bonds of christian fellowship; yet, if we wish to be faithful, we must warn and exhort them, though it should grieve both ourselves and them. We must leave the result to God; but we are encouraged to hope that he will crown our efforts with success, and comfort us when cast down, by reviving his work in the hearts of his people, and imparting that sense of the evil of sin which shall lead them to sorrow after a godly manner.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 10—16.

THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW.

THE Apostle had alluded to the grief which his first Epistle had occasioned to the Corinthians, and had noticed, with grati-

tude, the happy effects it had produced, in leading them to reform the abuses which prevailed among them: they had sorrowed *after a godly manner*. He now explains more fully the nature of that sorrow which is according to God. 10. "For godly sorrow worketh reformation (*μετάνοια*) unto salvation, not to be repented of, (*ἀμετάνοια*): but the sorrow of the world worketh death." This spiritual *grief* (*λῦπη*) does not spend itself in vain complaints and tears. It does not arise, as was before observed, from the shame of detection; from pride of heart at discovering the deficiency of one's own righteousness; from the present inconveniences or distresses which sin may occasion, or from losing the good opinion of others; nor does it consist in a temporary excitement of the feelings, gradually subsiding and followed by a repetition of the same fault. But it flows from a sense of the odious nature of sin; from a consciousness of having offended a God of infinite purity and love; from a fear of losing the tokens of his favour, and the communications of his grace; from reflecting on the dishonour brought on the Gospel, and the injury done to the souls of others; from a consideration that we have acted ungratefully towards our Saviour, and have grieved the Holy Spirit. The language of godly sorrow is beautifully expressed by David, in the 51st Psalm, where, at the 4th verse, he says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest;" and at the 16th verse, "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering: the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Hence it produces (*κατεργάζεται*), a corresponding *change* of the judgment, affections, and conduct. It leads to a sincere abhorrence and renunciation of sin, and to a reliance on the atonement of Christ, and the influences of the Spirit, for deliverance both from its guilt and power. Accordingly it issues in *salvation*; the believing penitent is set free from the condemnation of the law; the spiritual renovation of his soul is effected, and his salvation is completed, by his entire deliverance from sin, and advancement to glory. This is a *reformation not to be repented of*: there is no cause of regret in becoming the subject of it, and none have ever repented the change: the *salvation* itself is also *unchangeable*; no genuine believer can fall short of it, or be disappointed of his hope: So

the word *ἀποκαταστήσῃ*, may signify, and is used in this sense, Rom. xi. 29. Our translators, in this verse, have introduced a paronomasia, which does not occur in the Apostle's words. The word *repentance* scarcely expresses the force of the Greek *μετάνοια*; and the phrase is purposely varied, to express the permanency of the change spoken of.

How different is the sorrow of *the world*, that is, of unconverted men! It arises from some earthly cause, such as the loss of their property, or of their friends,—of their health or reputation. It springs from self-righteous pride: It spends itself in vain regrets: It has for its object the *effects* of sin, rather than the *act*: It attributes blame to second causes, overlooking the great first cause: It utters impatient and impious murmurs against Providence: It sinks the spirits, wounds the conscience, and breaks the heart. It not unfrequently urges the unhappy delinquent, from false shame, to put a period to his own existence, and thus literally *works death*. In other cases, it leads him to commit new crimes in order to conceal the first, and thus brings him to an ignominious and untimely end. At all events, the fruit of these things is spiritual and eternal death. Examples of this we find in the history of Cain, of Saul, of Ahithophel, and Judas Iscariot. Godly sorrow produces a change of mind which issues in salvation; the sorrow of the world produces remorse, but the sentiments remain unchanged, and the bitter fruit is death.

The sorrow of the Corinthians had manifested itself to be of God, by its effects: 11. "For behold this same thing, (namely) that ye sorrowed after a godly manner, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, indignation; yea, fear; yea, vehement desire; yea, zeal; yea, revenge! In every thing ye have approved yourselves to be pure (*ἁγνοίαι*) in this matter." Thus it yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It produced the most active *diligence* (*σπουδή*) to rectify prevailing disorders, and to comply with the Apostle's directions. It led the faithful part of the church to clear themselves from the imputation of conniving at sin, and the disorderly members to *apologize* (*ἀπολογία*) for their fault. It awakened a holy *indignation* (*ἀγανάκτησις*, resentment) against those sins which they had formerly viewed with indifference, if not with complacency; so that they were not only *displeased* with themselves on that account, but could no longer tolerate in their communion, those

who were guilty. It displayed itself by a holy *fear* (φοβος), lest similar offences should again occur, and be the means of depriving them of the privileges of the Gospel. It prompted them to a *fervent desire* (παρακαλῶ) of being again restored to the joys of God's salvation, and to the confidence and friendship of the Apostle. It evinced its reality, by unfeigned *zeal* (ζῆλος) for the divine glory, and for the honour of the christian faith. It wrought in them, so to speak, *revenge* against themselves (ἐκδικαίω), for being so foolish and ungrateful, as to be led away by the error of the wicked, and thus to fall from their own stedfastness. The force of the expression, "what revenge," may be illustrated by the well-known story of Archbishop Cranmer, who, having been induced, from a desire to save his life, to sign a recantation of the Protestant faith, afterwards repented, and when led to the stake, held his right hand in the fire till it was consumed, exclaiming, "Thou unworthy hand—thou unworthy hand!" By the dispositions here enumerated, and by every other possible means, the Corinthians had shewn that they heartily repented of their former conduct, and were *pure* from all further blame, touching the affair of the incestuous person. By excommunicating the offender, they had cleared themselves from the suspicion of conniving at his fault, and evinced their determination to maintain the discipline and purity of the church.

When the Apostle formerly addressed them on this point, he did not write from feelings of personal prejudice against the *offender*, or merely for the sake of bringing him to punishment; nor was he actuated by motives of private friendship or partiality towards the *suffering party*, but from a regard for their prosperity as a church, and to manifest towards them, as in the divine presence, his anxious care for their spiritual interests: 12. "Wherefore (αἰεὶ) though I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of him who did wrong (ἀδικησάντος), nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong (ἀδικηθέντος), but for the sake of (ὕμῶν) manifesting to you our care (συνουχίαν) for you in the sight of God." By the *injured party*, the Apostle is supposed to allude to the father of the incestuous person, who had been greatly *injured* and dishonoured by his son.

As, therefore, they had taken his reproofs in good part, and had felt the consolation arising from obedience and faithfulness, Paul had now the pleasure of sharing with them in their satis-

faction; and not only so, but his happiness was greatly increased by participating in the joy which his beloved *Titus* experienced, in witnessing the reformation produced among them; for the *soul* of that faithful minister was *eased of its burden*, by their unanimous submission. 13. "Wherefore, we were comforted in your comfort; yea, were rejoiced the more exceedingly (*περισσότερος μάλλον*), for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed (*ανεπαύσθη*) by you all." The Apostle, in his conversations with Titus, had often alluded to the prosperity of the Corinthian church, and had mentioned their piety and zeal, with marks of high commendation. This he calls *boasting on their behalf*: 14. "For if I have boasted (*αυαυχῆμαι*) any thing to him concerning you, I am not ashamed: for as we spoke all things to you (*ὑμῖν*, concerning you—*M'Knight*;) in truth, so also our boasting which was before Titus, (*αὐτῷ*) is found a truth." He was greatly pleased to think that their conduct in the present affair, fully warranted his good opinion, and justified the strong terms which he had employed respecting them. As the doctrines he had taught them were indeed true, and the reproofs he had administered were borne out by facts, so he had the satisfaction to find that he had not exceeded the bounds of propriety and truth, in what he had said to Titus in their favour. He had no reason to be ashamed of his commendation.

The love of that pious and excellent man towards the Corinthians, was also *increased*, while he *called to mind* the readiness of the whole church to *submit* to the Apostle's directions, and their anxious care that all things might be adjusted agreeably to his mind; 15. "And his tender affection (*σπλαγγισμός*), is more abundant towards you, whilst he remembers (*ἀναμνησθεμένου*) the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him." Instead of persisting in their factious and contentious spirit, which might have led them to protest against the interference of Titus, they had received him in the most affectionate and respectful manner, and shewed him all that deference which was due to an inspired teacher and faithful friend.

Paul would therefore again express his *satisfaction* that he could restore them to his confidence, and rely on their enlightened and cheerful submission to his authority as an ambassador of Christ; 16. "I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence (*ἀεζέω*) in you in all things." As the expression signifies, he was not afraid

to speak *boldly* in their favour. By this conciliatory manner of address, the Apostle intimates, that only a small part of the church were deficient in their duty ; he prepares them for the remaining reproofs and admonitions contained in this letter, and especially secures their good will, when about to recommend the collection for the saints at Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Has our sorrow for sin led to a change of conduct? Let us ascribe our repentance to divine grace, and rejoice in the hope of final salvation. What avail the austerities and penances of the self-righteous, while the heart is not subdued and broken ; or the vain regrets of the impenitent, while, after the most solemn resolutions of amendment, they still return to folly! Such repentance must sooner or later be regretted. On the contrary, the recollection of having overcome temptation, or returned to duty, is accompanied with the purest pleasure—it needs not to be repented of.

2. The marks of repentance here enumerated, are to be considered rather with reference to the peculiar circumstances of the case referred to, and the various parts which different individuals acted, than as so many distinct evidences of evangelical sorrow. Still, however, they may be accommodated to illustrate this. See, then, what *carefulness* to discover the occasion of our falling into sin, and to avoid the appearance of evil, true repentance will produce—what ingenuous *confession* and self-condemnation on account of it—what *indignation* against those sins which have brought dishonour on the cause of truth—what *fear* of losing the sweet sense of God's favour—what *earnest desire* of deliverance from guilt, and restoration to spiritual comfort—what *zeal* to promote the glory of God and the edification of our fellow-men—what *revenge* on ourselves for acting so unworthily a part! We have a beautiful description of genuine repentance in Jeremiah xxxi. 18—20. “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented ; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” Nor is the ac-

count given us of the publican (Luke xviii. 13.) less instructive :
 “ He stood afar off, and would not lift up so much as his eyes unto
 heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me
 a sinner !”

¶ How happy should the ministers of Christ be, when His of-
 fending people are brought to repentance ! how ready should
 they show themselves to restore them to their confidence ! how
 mollifying and conciliatory should be their language ! and how
 desirous should they appear so to administer reproof as to make
 it evident that they are not actuated by angry passions, but by
 the purest concern for their salvation, as in the sight of God !

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—11.

THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR IN JUDEA RECOMMENDED.

THE primitive churches were distinguished for their mutual
 love ; and this was manifested by the substantial fruits of benevo-
 lence. Each society maintained a common fund by the contri-
 butions of its members, which was appropriated to various pious
 and charitable uses. Not only did they contribute for the sup-
 port of their pastors, and for the relief of their own poor, but
 they occasionally sent aid to other churches, where assistance was
 required. Captives, slaves, widows, orphans, and sick persons,
 all shared their liberality. The ordinary collection for the poor
 was usually made after the celebration of the Lord's supper. Thus
 Justin Martyr, as quoted by Lord Chancellor King, observes,

"Every one that was able and willing, gave according to his ability, and that which was gathered was committed to the care of the bishop (or president, *ἐπισκοπὴν*) who relieved therewith the orphans and widows, the sick and distressed, prisoners, travellers, strangers, and in a word, all that had need thereof," Apol. 2. (*King's Enquiry*, p. 149.) This holy principle was carried to the greatest extent in the church at Jerusalem, where the disciples had all things common, (Acts ii. 44.); but as this was found to be attended with inconveniences, it was not followed as a general rule: and in other churches, each member was left under the guidance of his own conscience, to impart such a proportion of his gains as he could lawfully give away, without neglecting other objects. The church in Jerusalem did not long enjoy the favour of the world, (Acts ii. 47.) Persecution first began to rage there, and many were scattered abroad: others were deprived of their property, or abandoned by their friends, (Heb. x. 33, 34.) The country began to be also harassed with wars, and to this was added the calamity of famine, (Acts xi. 28.) On this occasion, great sympathy was shewn by the Gentile churches. These felt the obligation they owed to their Jewish brethren, as having first received the Gospel from them; and though on some points they differed, this did not interfere with the exercise of christian love. We find the church in Antioch contributing for their relief, (Acts xi. 27—30.) and also the churches in Galatia, (1 Cor. xvi. 1.) From what is here stated, it would seem that the churches in Macedonia, namely, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, united in the same good work. Nor was the church at *Corinth* indifferent to the welfare of their elder brethren. In his first epistle, the Apostle had given directions on this subject, in the view of his coming, (chap. xvi. 1—3.) In this and the following chapter, he urges them to complete their contributions. These were afterwards made up and delivered to the Apostle, who conveyed the money to the church at Jerusalem, (Rom. xv. 25, 26. Acts xxiv. 17.)

In the close of the last chapter, he had expressed his confidence in the christian character of the Corinthians; and he now proceeds to enforce, by suitable arguments, the duty of liberality. With great delicacy and address, he *informs them*, as a piece of gratifying intelligence, of the happy disposition shewn by the Macedonian brethren to supply the necessities of the poor saints,

which he devoutly ascribes to the abundant grace bestowed on them by Him from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift: 1, 2. "Moreover, brethren, we make known (*γνωρίζω*) to you the grace of God which is given (*δίδωμι*) to the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial (*ἡ πολλὰ δαίμων*) of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded (or overflowed, *ἐπεφύετο*) to the riches of their liberality." Some interpret the words, *τῇ χάριτι τῇ Θεῷ*, &c. as if the meaning were, *the exceeding great gift* imparted by the churches; but the usual translation is far more natural; and besides, it is quite agreeable to the Apostle's manner, to refer all holy affections and desires to divine influence. The Macedonian churches had endured a *great fight of affliction*, when the Gospel was first planted among them, (Acts xvi. 19, 20.; xvii. 5, 13.) as well as during its subsequent progress, (Phil. i. 29. 1 Thess. ii. 14.); yet this *severe trial* did not cool their zeal, or furnish them with an excuse for neglecting the offices of brotherly love. On the contrary, such was *their joy* in the Lord; such the abundance of their consolations, such the warmth of their gratitude for his redeeming mercy, that no labour or sacrifice seemed too great, which might promote the happiness of their christian brethren; the *depth* of their *poverty* served to illustrate and enhance their *rich liberality*; so that the one formed an affecting contrast to the other; and both their joy and their poverty produced the most noble results. Dr Mac-knight renders the middle clause of the second verse, "Notwithstanding their deep poverty." The spirit of the passage is well preserved in the French version, (Paris edition of 1805) though it cannot be considered as a literal translation: "C'est qu'ayant été éprouvés par plusieurs afflictions, ils ont été remplis de joie, et que dans leur profonde pauvreté ils ont répandu avec abondance les richesses de leur libéralité: how that having been tried by many afflictions, they were filled with joy, and that, in their deep poverty, they diffused abundantly the riches of their liberality."

Instead of requiring to be stirred up to the performance of their duty, they were *self-moved*; or rather, as he observes elsewhere, (1 Thess. iv. 9.) they "were taught of God to love one another." 3. "For according to (*κατὰ*) their power, I bear witness, (*μαρτυρῶ*), and beyond (*ὑπὲρ*) their power, they were willing of themselves (*αὐθαίρετοι*)."

of worldly prudence, or shew any dread of exceeding a fair proportion in this matter; but the Apostle could *testify* that they had voluntarily exerted themselves to the utmost of their power, yea, their inclination went *beyond their ability*. Instead of pleading their deep poverty as a reason for doing nothing, they seemed to forget their own necessities in their anxious care of others: 4. "With much entreaty (*παρακλήσεις*) praying us that we would receive the gift, even (*καί*) the communion of the ministry (or service, *διακονίας*) to the saints." The Apostle seems to have been apprehensive lest they should injure themselves, and scarcely leave a sufficiency for the supply of their own wants; he appears to have felt a reluctance to receive at least the *whole* sum which they had collected; but they would take no denial; they were grieved that he should even hesitate to comply with their wishes; they were afraid of being deprived of the luxury of doing good; they pressed their bounty upon him, and prayed that they might be allowed to share in the delightful *fellowship* of ministering to the saints.

5. In all this, they far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the Apostle: "And not as we hoped, or expected (*ὡς ἐλπίζομεν*), but first gave themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God." There is an obscurity attaching to the first clause of this verse. M^cKnight renders it, "not as we feared;" that is, the Macedonians did not, as the Apostle apprehended, plead their inability and poverty as an excuse for not contributing; but the word *ἐλπίζω*, is never used in this sense in the New Testament. Parkhurst, with others, proposes to insert the word *μόνον* before the verb, and to read, "This they did not *merely* as we hoped;" so the French translators render the passage, "Et ils n'ont pas seulement fait ce que nous avions espéré d'eux." This renders the sense clear. Not only had they surrendered themselves at first to *Christ*, when they turned from their dumb idols to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, but in this instance, they first submitted themselves to him *by the will of God*, that they, their property, talents, and influence might be disposed of to his glory; and then they surrendered themselves to the Apostle, to be guided by him, in all respects, as should be most agreeable to the divine *will*. By mentioning the alacrity of the poor Macedonians, the sacred writer obliquely reproves the backwardness of the Corinthians, who were free from persecution, and placed in opulent circumstances.

6. The amiable conduct of these christians had produced such an impression on the Apostle's mind, that he could not help proposing it as an example to the church at Corinth. He was unwilling that they should be outdone by their poorer brethren; and he therefore requested Titus to pay them a second visit, for the purpose of hastening their contributions. He accordingly adds, "so that we exhorted Titus, that as he had before begun (*ἡρμηνεύει*) so he would finish in you (*ἐν ὑμῖν*) the same grace (or gift, *χάρις*) also." This minister, during his former visit, had happily commenced this good work among them; but the contribution was still *unfinished* when he left them, and the Apostle thought he would be the most suitable person to bring it to a prosperous issue. The church at Corinth was already distinguished by every variety of *spiritual gifts*; and Paul would not have them fall short of other churches, in the exercise of Christian beneficence: 7. "Therefore, (*ἀλλὰ*) as ye abound in every thing (*ἐν παντί*, in every gift,) in faith, and in utterance, and in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, (see) that ye abound in this grace also." They excelled in a firm *persuasion* of the truth of the Gospel (*ἐν πίστει*) and in a realizing sense of the glory and certainty of eternal things; they had many individuals among them endowed with the gift of *tongues*, and with eminent powers of *utterance* (*λόγος*), for the instruction of others. They possessed a knowledge of the mysteries of Christ (*γινώσκοντες*) above many. They shewed the greatest *diligence* (*σπουδή*) in promoting the interests of divine truth, and in restoring, by a wholesome discipline, the purity of the church; nor were they deficient in their *attachment* to the Apostle as their spiritual father; and he wished them also to abound in the duty of brotherly love, without which all other gifts would profit them nothing, (1 Epis. chap. xiii.) We have already endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the spiritual endowments here enumerated, (1 Epis. chap. xii. 8—10.)

In saying this, he did not mean authoritatively to *enjoin*, what sum of money each individual should give: this must be left to his own judgment; and the whole must appear to be the spontaneous effect of christian principle; but he took occasion from the diligence of their brethren in Macedonia, to provoke them to emulation, and in this manner to *ascertain by experiment*, whether they indeed felt that sincere affection for him which they

professed: 8. "I speak not by commandment (*κατ' ἐπιταγήν*, *quasi imperans*—*Vulg.* as an injunction, *M'Knight*) but on account of (*διὰ*) the readiness (*σπουδή*) of others, and as trying the genuineness of your love, (*γνησίως δοκιμαζέτω*)."
 As a farther inducement, he would only remind them of the condescension and goodness of their divine Redeemer, of which they had often heard, and in which they professed to believe: 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich (*πλουτὶς ἐγώ*), for your sake he became poor, that ye by his poverty might be made rich." Here we have an explicit declaration of the supreme glory of our Saviour, in his pre-existent state: He was infinitely *rich* in the possession of divine honours, in his own essential sufficiency as God, and in the dominion of the universe, which was created and sustained by his power; yet he voluntarily *emptied himself* of his original dignity, and appeared in the form of a servant, submitting to a life of poverty, reproach, hardship, and suffering, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, (*ἐταχέναι*, *he made himself poor*.) It was his choice to be born of a poor virgin, to be laid in a manger, and to labour with his own hands. Though he was Lord of all, he had not where to lay his head. To this humiliation, he stooped *for the sake of* poor, sinful, and perishing men, who had rebelled against him, and had forfeited all claim to his favourable regard; and his merciful design was, *that they, through his poverty*, that is, by virtue of his sufferings and death, might not only be redeemed from endless woe, but *enriched* with all the blessings of grace, and glory,—pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life. This passage is exactly parallel with the account of our Saviour's humiliation, in Philip. ii. 5—11.; there he is represented as being in the form of God, *before* he appeared in the likeness of men. Nothing can be more futile, than the attempts of the Socinians to explain away these proofs of the pre-existence and deity of Christ. His being *rich*, must refer to his glory as a divine person *antecedently* to his incarnation. It cannot apply to him during his abode on earth. To explain it of his possessing miraculous powers, is to trifle with the common sense of the reader, and only exposes the weakness of that cause which must be supported by such evasions. Does not our Lord himself speak of the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was? (John xvii. 5.) And do we not read that that Divine Word which

was in the beginning with God, became flesh and dwelt among us? (chap. i. 1, 14.) Merely to say, that our Saviour did not employ his miraculous powers to *enrich himself*, is to say nothing more than what is true of all the apostles and prophets; but to inform us, that He who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took on him the form of a servant, and became obedient to the death of the cross, affords the most glorious instance of compassion and love which the world ever saw. Nothing could be more to the Apostle's purpose. If the Corinthians really had *just impressions* of such unparalleled goodness, they could not surely refuse those small sacrifices which they were called on to make, on behalf of their suffering brethren; and this inference is so obvious, that the Apostle does not think it necessary formally to announce it, but leaves it to their own judgment. He would therefore advise them to make up their contributions without further delay: 10. "And herein (*νῦν*) I give my opinion (*γινώσκω*), for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be willing a year ago (*πρὸ ἑξήκοντα ἡμερῶν*)." It was for their own advantage (*συμφέρει*) that he urged this point; he knew he was addressing persons who had, long ago, manifested unusual *alacrity* in this labour of love. If, therefore, they had any regard to their reputation, they ought not to lose any more time in making up their collection. He now begged they would carry their intention into effect, that their *actual contributions* might bear some proportion to their *professed zeal*, and to their respective ability. 11. "Now, therefore, finish (*τελειώσατε*) the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to *will*, so there may also be to *accomplish*, out of that which ye have." The readiness to *perform* would thus correspond with the readiness to *resolve*;—*το ποιῆσαι* is opposed to *το θέλειν*.

REFLECTIONS.

1. There are many calls, in the present day, for the exercise of christian benevolence. Let us emulate the example of the churches of Macedonia, who, out of their deep poverty, displayed the richest liberality. How few are there who give according to their ability—who are willing of themselves, and who earnestly desire opportunities of ministering to the saints! "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's;" and many who begin to

will, with apparent alacrity, are lamentably deficient in the *performance* of virtuous actions. Let us see that we love, "not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth;" but let our first care be to give ourselves to the Lord; otherwise we may give all our goods to feed the poor, and it will profit us nothing.

2. Observe how every precept of the New Testament is enforced by evangelical motives. Are we commanded to love one another? It is because Christ also loved us, and gave himself as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. Are we enjoined to forgive one another? It is because God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. Are we exhorted to the exercise of benevolence? We are reminded of the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." He, therefore, who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John iii. 17.)

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—24.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE Apostle had exhorted the Corinthians, to make up, as soon as possible, the collection which they had begun nearly a year before, for the poor christians in Judea, and had adduced, for their encouragement, the noble example of the Macedonian churches. In doing this, he further intimates, that no member of the church ought to be discouraged, though his circumstances might not permit him to give as much as others: 12. "For if a willing mind be first present (*ὡς γὰρ ἡ προθυμία προέσται*), a man is accepted (*ὡς προσδεύεται*), according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not." The first clause is well rendered by the Vulgate, "*Si enim voluntas prompta est.*" In all contributions of this nature, the great *prerequisite* is *readiness of mind*, inclining the individual to give from a sense of the goodness of God, from an experimental knowledge of the value of the Gospel, and from love to the brethren, for Christ's sake; and the rule of acceptance in these

free-will offerings, is not the gross amount of the sum given, but the proportion which it bears to the income of the contributor. Thus, the widow's mite may afford a more affecting proof of liberality, than the splendid donations of the rich, who cast into the treasury of their abundance, (Luke xxi. 4.) Even a cup of cold water given to a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward, (Matt. x. 42.) We are therefore exhorted to "do good and to communicate, for with such sacrifices God is *well pleased*," (Heb. xiii. 16.) and all classes may share in the high satisfaction of ministering to the saints. But without a *willing mind*, no act of charity, and no religious service, will be *approved*. On the other hand, we are not required to exceed a just proportion in our labours of love, to the neglect of other duties, and especially to the injury of our relatives. Our Lord justly censures the avarice of the Jewish priesthood, because they encouraged the people to devote to the treasury of the temple, that which ought to have been expended in the support of their aged parents, (Matt. xv. 5, 6.); and if by an improvident liberality, even in the cause of religion, we involve ourselves in debt which we are unable to pay, we in fact give away what is not our own.

Neither did the Apostle mean to call his brethren to such exertions as would bring *them* into difficulties, and raise the objects of their benevolence to a state of *affluence*, or render it less necessary that they should work with their own hands. 13. "For (I do not wish) that others should have ease (*ἀναις*), and you trouble (*θλαΐς*)." It is generally very imprudent to elevate the poor above their station, by profuse liberality. This tends to produce *indolence*, pride, and ingratitude. The *season*, as well as the *measure*, of relief, should be wisely considered. How many persons have brought themselves into trouble by supporting, in idleness, their profligate or extravagant relations! What he intended was, to establish and cherish an *equality* among the disciples of Christ; not by merging into one all the distinctions of rank, and introducing a forced community of goods, which would relax the springs of industry, interrupt the reciprocal duties of the rich and poor, and unhinge the frame of civil society; but an *equality of obligation* to aid each other, by promoting a common feeling of sympathy and love; so that every one should be ready, on all necessary occasions, to run to the relief of another;—accordingly he adds, 14. "But by an equality (*ἐξ ἰσότητος*), that at the present

time your abundance (may be a supply) for their want (or deficiency, *δυσέπεια*), that their abundance also (may be a supply) for your want, so that there may be an equality." The christians in Corinth were now in a flourishing and prosperous state, while their brethren in Judea were reduced, by persecution and famine, to great difficulties. But in the uncertainty of human affairs, the Corinthians did not know how soon the respective situations of the parties might be *reversed*; and they might be under the necessity, at another time, of applying to their Jewish brethren for aid. Therefore it was their duty *now*, to give them effectual relief; and he doubted not that they would be equally ready to return the favour, if ever it were necessary or practicable. Thus a just balance (*ισότης*) would be maintained, and a common interest felt. The same thing is implied in our Saviour's golden rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." In another sense, it was the duty of the Corinthians to *communicate* to the believing Hebrews of their *temporal* abundance, as they had already shared in the *spiritual* blessings imparted to the latter. This was *equitable*; for, as he observes, in another place, (Rom. xv. 27.) "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

In this way, the circumstances of the christian churches might be compared to those of the Israelites in the desert. 15. "According as it is written, (Exod. xvi. 18.) he that (had gathered) much had nothing over (*οὐκ ἐπλεονεκτήσεν*), and he that (had gathered) little had no deficiency (*οὐκ ἠλάττωσεν*)." Every man was allowed to gather an omer of manna for his own use; but it would frequently happen, that the more active would collect *more* than the stipulated quantity, while the aged and infirm would be unable to gather *so much*. This inconvenience was, however, rectified. The manna was afterwards measured, and what the former had *over*, was given to the latter class. Some have absurdly supposed, from this expression, that whatever quantity individuals might gather, it never either exceeded, or was short of, the appointed measure. But this is to multiply miracles without necessity. In the original Hebrew, the verbs *וַיְהִי* and *וַיִּהְיֶה* are in the *hiphel* or causative conjugation, which implies an effect upon another; and the verse might have been rendered, "He caused him who had much, to have nothing over," &c.; evidently referring to a previous

admeasurement. The Providence of God was, however, signally displayed in providing just the proper quantity for the whole congregation, which was collected every day. In the same manner, in a wider sense, those who are rich, will find abundant channels for their charity to flow in, and those who are poor will never want.

The Apostle was very anxious that the Corinthians should bear their just proportion in this good work, and had requested Titus to go before, and exhort them to finish their contributions. It was unnecessary, however, to use any argument with his fellow labourer; for a similar desire was manifested by Titus himself, which the Apostle devoutly ascribes to divine influence. 16. "Now, thanks be to God who hath put (or given, *δίδωμι*) the same earnest care (*σπουδή*) for you into the heart of Titus." He indeed had cheerfully received the advice of his brother; but being even more bent on accomplishing his mission than Paul had enjoined, he was himself inclined to go, irrespective of any exhortation. 17. "For indeed he accepted (*δέχεται*) the exhortation; but being more diligent (*σπουδαιότερος*), of his own accord (*αυθαίρετος*) he went unto you." Titus performed that *willingly*, which God had put into his heart. Thus the doctrine of divine influence does not interfere with the freedom of our volitions. Besides Titus, the Apostle had sent other two brethren (see v. 22.) who had been nominated by the churches in Macedonia, to accompany him to Jerusalem, to see that the money was faithfully and judiciously applied. It is not known who those persons were, nor is it of great consequence to determine. The *former* of them is thought to have been Luke, whose name is mentioned in the postscript, and of whom he gives a very high character: 18, 19. "And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in (or by, *ἐν*) the Gospel throughout all the churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us, (our fellow traveller, *συνταξάμενος ἡμῶν*) with this gift, which is administered by us, to the glory of the same Lord (or of the Lord himself, *αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου*) and (manifestation of) your ready mind." The phrase, *ἐν ᾧ ἰσχυρίσθητε δια πάντων τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν*, may merely signify, that this brother was well known, and greatly *honoured*, throughout the churches, on account of his talents, piety, and diligence in preaching the Gospel. Some, however, think that the words, *ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ*, "in or by the Gospel," refer to the history of our Lord's

life, written by the Evangelist Luke, and which was by this time generally read, and greatly esteemed in the churches. This was not, however, the *only* reason of his being now sent; for he had been specially appointed by the churches who had made the collection, to go along with the Apostle, and to assist in distributing the present, which had been entrusted to Paul's administration, and which had been raised to the honour of their common Saviour, and to afford a proof of the good will of the Gentile converts towards their Jewish brethren. The same ends would be accomplished, by the faithful manner in which the gift would be *disposed of* by the Apostle and his fellow-travellers. These messengers were chosen by the common suffrage of the brethren, in the same manner as other church officers were elected. So the word *χειροτονηθεις* unquestionably signifies.

The churches might indeed have safely committed the whole management of this business to the Apostle himself, without fear of any part of the money being improperly applied. But he would not incur so great responsibility. He wished the churches themselves to select proper persons to go along with him as witnesses of his fidelity. In this way all suspicion would be avoided of his withholding any part of it, or applying it to any other than its original destination. 20. "Avoiding this, (*σμελλόμενοι ταῦτα devitantes hoc. Vulg.*) that no one should blame us in this abundance (*ἁφροτητι* which is administered by us." It was the more necessary to guard against blame, considering the largeness or abundance of the sum entrusted to his care, and the readiness of the enemies of the Gospel to find fault. As he was conscious of acting with strict integrity *before God*, so, by considering before hand (*προνοούμενοι*) what was *comely*, (*κἄλα*) and of good report, he was desirous that his whole conduct in this affair should appear to the world to be fair and honourable. 21. "Providing for honest things (premeditating things comely—*M. Knight*.) not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." This was a favourite rule with the Apostle, (Rom. xii. 17.) Accordingly, he had thought proper to select a *third* person for this purpose, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every matter might be established:" 22. "And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have often proved to be diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, in the great confidence which I have (or he hath) in you." Some think that the brother

here alluded to, was Apollos; but this individual is spoken of as a *stranger*. Others suppose Silas is meant; at any rate, he was well known to the Apostle, who had had ample opportunity of ascertaining (*ἀκριβοῦς*) his fidelity and zeal on various occasions. At present, indeed, he shewed more than common alacrity to visit Corinth, in consequence of what *Paul* had said to the honour of the church there, or from *his own* great confidence in their christian character. The last clause is ambiguous, (*πιστεύου πολλὰ τῇ ἐκ' ὑμῶν*.)

The Apostle anticipated many enquiries, especially on the part of the factious members, as to the character and authority of these brethren, and their design in coming to Corinth; and he here supplies a satisfactory answer. 23. "If any (*ἄνθρωπος*) (enquire) concerning Titus, he is my partner, (*κοινωνός*) and fellow-labourer (*συνεργός*) towards you; or (concerning) our brethren, they are the messengers (*ἀποστόλοι*) of the churches, the glory of Christ." Titus was his constant companion in preaching, and his helper at Corinth; and the other two were *sent forth* by their own churches, as their accredited messengers, and were possessed of such excellent characters, as to reflect great *glory* on that Saviour whose servants and followers they were. Paul therefore entreated the Corinthians to exert themselves, on this occasion, to the utmost of their ability, that they might afford, by their generous contribution, an evident proof, not only to these brethren, but to the churches in general, of their christian love; and justify the high opinion which he had expressed of their good conduct and liberality. 24. "Wherefore, shew ye to them, and before (*ὡς πρόσωπον*) the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting concerning you.

REFLECTIONS.

1. In considering this passage, we cannot but admire the strict integrity of the Apostle. Had he wished to enrich himself at the expense of the churches, he would have avoided publicity, or selected associates devoted to his own interest. But he lays himself open to inspection; he chooses persons of approved fidelity, to assist him in the management of the charitable fund; nay, he allows the churches to send along with him messengers of their own appointment. In all pecuniary transactions, it is pro-

per to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*. If we neglect to provide for those of our own house, if we suffer our lawful debts to remain undischarged, and at the same time assume the praise of distinguished liberality, we justly expose ourselves to censure in the *abundance administered by us*.

2. Alas ! to what purpose do many gather much of this world's goods ? It may be asked, what have they over ? " They sow much, and bring in little ; they eat, but have not enough ; they drink, but are not filled with drink ; they clothe themselves, but there is none warm ; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes," (Hag. i. 6.) They lay up treasures on earth, but are not rich towards God. They withhold more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. Let us ever shew a readiness of mind to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted ; and though our means be comparatively scanty, we shall be accepted, " according to what we have, not according to what we have not."

CHAPTER NINTH.

FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENTS TO LIBERALITY.

THE design of this chapter is the same with that of the former, to press on the Corinthians the necessity of completing, as soon as possible, their collection for the poor christians in Judea. Though the circumstances referred to, are of a *local* nature, the rules here laid down, and the arguments and encouragements adduced, are of universal and permanent application. He had already mentioned some powerful considerations which ought to weigh with them. He now remarks, with his characteristic

kindness, that, considering their general disposition, it was almost unnecessary for him to say more on that subject: 1. "For indeed, (*οὐ γὰρ*) concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous (*περισσόν*) for me to write to you." He had already given directions respecting it, in his first Epistle, chap. xvi. 1—3., and he had no reason to doubt their readiness to every good work, when a proper case was presented to them. He could say to them, as he does to the Thessalonians, (1 Epis. iv. 9.) "as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you." He therefore did not now address them, with a view to enforce the *general principle*, but merely to stir up their pure minds, by way of remembrance, to the performance of a duty, of the importance of which they were fully aware.

He declares that he was well assured of their willingness to exert themselves on the present occasion, and had mentioned their early efforts, with great commendation, as an example to the Macedonian churches, in consequence of which many were *excited to emulation*: 2. "For I know the readiness of your mind, of which I boast (*καυχώμαι*, boasted—*M'Knight*) concerning you to the Macedonians (*Μακεδόσι*), that Achaia was ready (prepared, *παρασκευασταί*) a year ago, and your zeal hath stirred up (*ἠγειρεῖ*) very many." The Apostle knew that the brethren in Achaia had *begun* to collect with readiness at that time; and he might therefore reasonably conclude that their contributions were now fully made up; yet, as it was possible they might have become remiss, since the period referred to, he had thought proper to send Titus and the other two brethren before him, to see the money actually gathered in, so that (as he formerly observed) they might be *prepared* (*παρασκευασμένοι ἦτε*) to produce it when called for; lest the high commendation which he had given them on this point, should prove to have been an empty boast: 3. "But I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting concerning you should be rendered void (*κενὸν*) in this particular (*μέγεθ*), that (as I said) ye may be ready." This was the more necessary, as he expected some of the Macedonian brethren to accompany him in his visit to Corinth, who, of course, would soon discover whether the report which they had heard of their liberality were well founded; therefore he adds, 4. "Lest by any means (*μη πως*), if the Macedonians come with me, and find you unprepared, we should be ashamed (that we say not you) in this confidence (*ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι*) of

boasting." Should these strangers find that no further steps had been taken to complete the subscriptions, the Apostle would feel ashamed that he had spoken so confidently of their liberality; nor would it be for their own credit that such a discovery should be made: he would not say what *their own* feelings would be in such an emergency. This mode of *correcting* himself, is an extremely happy turn, and conveys a very forcible argument.

To avoid this unpleasant consequence, he had requested the brethren before mentioned, to proceed *immediately* to Corinth, and to make ready, previously to his arrival, the contribution formerly spoken of, that when he himself came, it might be in readiness, and thus appear as a free-will offering, (or blessing, εὐλογία), and not as a thing extorted from them (ὡςτις ἐλαυνόμενοι), by authority or importunity: 5. "Wherefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they might go before to you, and complete before hand your gift formerly announced, (προκαταρτίσαντες τὴν προκατηγγελλμένον εὐλογίαν), that the same might thus (ὡςτις) be ready as a gift, and not as extortion." The word נָתַתָּה, which properly signifies a blessing, is used in the Old Testament for a gift or present, (2 Kings v. 15, &c.)

He would not presume to say what sum each person should give, but he would remind them of *this*, as a general rule in providence, that, as in agriculture, the produce of the field is in proportion to the quantity of seed sown, so the future reward of the christian shall correspond, in some measure, to the extent of his liberality in this world. 6. "But this (I say) he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully (ἐπ' εὐλογίαις, in *benedictionibus*—*Vulg.*) shall reap also bountifully." To a person ignorant of the process of vegetation, the seed put into the ground, would seem to be thrown away; but what would be the consequence, if the husbandman should scatter with a sparing hand? He would reap but a scanty crop; but the bountiful sower may anticipate an abundant harvest. In the same manner, money given to the poor seems, to the selfish and covetous, to be imprudently squandered; yet it is here compared to *seed* which produces a plentiful increase. A similar figure is used, Eccles. xi. 1. "Cast thy bread-corn upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." Thus we are taught, that the glory of the saints in hea-

ven shall bear some proportion to their piety and usefulness on earth. This is agreeable to the general doctrine of scripture. The parable of the talents illustrates the same truth, (Matt. xxv. 14—30.)

Every individual, therefore, who is called to the exercise of benevolence, should first consult his own *heart*, and consider what are his obligations to divine mercy; what are the necessities of his brethren, and what reward he would wish to receive from his Lord, and then let him *give* according to these principles, obeying the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and not listening to the cold maxims of worldly prudence. 7. "Every man as he hath purposed (*προορίζεται*, *preoptavit*) in his heart, not with grief (*ἐκ λύπης*), or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver (*ἡλαρόν δοτὴν*)."
Whatever he bestows, he must do it *of choice*, in a cordial and affectionate manner, not as if he lamented the loss of his property, or were forced to yield to a pressing necessity; he must not require to be urged, or wound the feelings of the receiver by harsh reflections. This would greatly detract from the merit of the gift, which should be estimated rather by the principles and motives of the benefactor, than by the gross amount of the sum. To give grudgingly, or of necessity, is highly displeasing to God, who is the author of all our mercies, and has therefore a right to call for a proportion of that wealth which he hath given us, and delights in the free-will offerings of the heart. We have a fine example of a *cheerful giver* in the case of David, who, when contemplating the vast preparations made by himself and his people for the building of the temple, exclaims, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee," (1 Chron. xxix. 14.)

To encourage them further, the Apostle reminds them of the all-sufficiency and bounty of the Great Creator: 8. "And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that in every thing, at all times, having all-sufficiency, ye may abound in (*με*) every good work." The repetition of the word *all* is very beautiful and emphatic, *ἐν παντί, πάντοτε, πᾶσαν*, &c. Jehovah is able to impart to his children *every gift* in abundance (*πᾶσαν χάριν*), both of a temporal and spiritual nature. Thus he promised to Solomon, not only wisdom and knowledge, but riches, and wealth, and honour, (2 Chron. i. 12.) This abundance he can supply *at all times*,

when necessary, out of his infinite fulness ; for the earth is the Lord's, and all that is therein ; the events of providence are at his disposal, and all the blessings of salvation flow from him : And He is as *willing* as he is *able* ; for " they that seek Him shall not want any good ;" he has said " open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it ; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full ;" " Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it," (Mal. iii. 10.) Thus enriched by his bounty, and strengthened by his grace, the faithful servant of the Lord shall become increasingly useful, and be furnished with sufficient ability for glorifying God, and promoting the welfare of his fellow-men. He will never want opportunities of doing good, both to their souls and bodies ; and the *means* will surely be provided by Him in whom he confides. Thus we often see, that even the temporal prosperity of a christian keeps pace with his liberality ; the more he bestows, the more he is enabled to give, for " there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; the liberal soul shall be made fat : and he that watereth shall be watered also himself," (Prov. xi. 24, 25.)

This is agreeable to what is said of the righteous man ; 9. " As it is written, (Ps. cxii. 9.) He hath scattered (*ισχορπισεν*), he hath given to the poor ; his righteousness remaineth for ever." Instead of hiding his Lord's talent in the earth, he employs it in the service of his fellow creatures. Instead of laying up treasures in this world, he lays them out in the cause of God, and in works of mercy ; instead of spending his substance in riotous living, he feeds the hungry and clothes the naked ; " he does good unto all men as he has opportunity, especially to the household of faith ;" like Job, he is eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame ; " the blessing of him that is ready to perish comes upon him : and he causes the widow's heart to sing for joy," (Job xxix. 11—13 ; xxxi. 19, 20.) Thus his property, instead of being hoarded up, is *dispersed* into a thousand channels ; the covetous and worldly minded may be ready to pity his imprudence, and to deride his simplicity, but the blessed fruits of his faith and love shall endure for ever ; though *these* will not constitute a *justifying* righteousness, or establish a claim for acceptance with

God, they mark the character of him who is justified; they are held in remembrance by the Judge of all; they will be honourably mentioned, as proofs of his obedience, in the great day, and he shall in no wise lose his reward, (Luke xii. 33; xvi. 9.)

The Apostle devoutly prays, that such might be the experience of the christians in Corinth: 10. "Now may he that ministereth (or supplieth, *συντετρεως*) seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply your seed sown (*σπαρας*), and increase the fruits (*γυνασσα*) of your righteousness." Thus the words are pointed by M'Knight, after the Syriac and Arabic versions. The Apostle is here thought to allude to Isaiah lv. 10., where the earth is represented, under the influence of rain, as "giving seed to the sower, and bread to the eater," and where almost the same words are used by the LXX. He notices the wisdom and goodness of God, who not only supplies a sufficiency of nourishment from the fruits of the earth, for the use of man and cattle during the course of the year, but provides a surplus to be used *as seed*, from which the future crop may be raised; and he entreats that the same God would *supply and multiply their seed sown*; that is, either literally, that he would bless the increase of their fields, and provide sufficient grain both for seed and food; or rather, in a spiritual sense, that he would give them increasing ability to supply the wants of others, and dispose them more and more to bring forth the precious fruits of righteousness. The former sense is preferred by M'Knight, who, in paraphrasing the last clause, seems to overlook the obvious reference to the promise in the book of Psalms, (ver. 9.) and to lower the dignity of the subject;—"may he increase the produce of your honest industry." The brethren at Corinth, being thus amply supplied out of the divine fulness, with all things necessary to the exercise of every kind of benevolence, would be the honoured instruments of relieving the necessities of the saints, and of exciting their gratitude to the Father of mercies, for the bounty so seasonably bestowed through the medium of the Apostle and his companions: 11. "Being enriched in every thing, to all liberality (*απλοτητα*, simplicity), which produceth (*κατιγαλιστα*) through us thanksgiving unto God." The relief of the poor saints was a great point gained by the raising of this fund; but it would secure a nobler end: 12. "For the ministration of this service not only supplieth (filleth up,

ἀποκρίσεις) the wants (ὑποτάξεις) of the saints, but also aboundeth by or in (ἐν) many thanksgivings unto God." It would cease abundance of thanksgivings to be offered up to the Giver of all good, not only by the persons relieved, but by the Apostle and the whole church. They would acknowledge with gratitude, the proof that was thus afforded them of the genuine conversion of their Gentile brethren, and of their disinterested beneficence both towards them and to all other proper objects: 13. "Whilst, by the experiment (or proof, δεικνύς) of this service, they glorify God for the obedience of your profession (καὶ τὴν ὑποταγήν τὴν ἐκλογικὴν ὄψιν) to the Gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your communication (ἐπιλομένης τὰς αἰτήσεις) to them and to all." Their obedience was agreeable to the confession which they had made, or, as Dr Doddridge well expresses it, they glorify God "on account of that subjection to the Gospel of Christ which you profess;" for, as he justly observes, it is not merely a *professed* but a *real* subjection of which the Apostle speaks. This liberality also subdued the prejudices of the Jewish brethren against the Gentiles, so that, in their religious services, special prayers were offered up on behalf of their generous benefactors; and they felt an ardent desire for a closer intercourse with those who were so eminently distinguished by divine grace: 14. "They also, in their prayer for you, longing after you (συνδοκῶν), on account of the exceeding grace of God (ἐπεμβαλλομένη χάρις) in, or upon (ἐν) you." The mention of the grace of God as displayed in the holy lives of the disciples, led the Apostle, by a transition natural to him, to break out into holy admiration of the unutterable goodness of God in the gift of his dear Son: 15. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift (ἀνυμνητὸν δῶκεν)" Some have thought, that he still refers to the large measure of divine influence bestowed on the Gentile churches; but it is observable, that the word, rendered *gift*, is purposely *varied*, as if to lead our thoughts to a more illustrious proof of the divine goodness than any he had yet mentioned, namely, the gift of a *Saviour*; and his argument is, that no sacrifice on our part, can afford an adequate expression of gratitude for such a benefit. A similar argument occurs, 1 John iv. 10, 11. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Such an instance of divine mercy can ne-

never be sufficiently expressed or admired. Christ is the unspeakable gift of God; if we consider the infinite dignity of his person, the misery from which he came to rescue us, and the blessings bestowed on us through his sufferings and death.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

REFLECTIONS.

1. In reviewing this whole discourse, it may be proper to observe, with what force and variety of argument the Apostle recommends the exercise of liberality. He refers to the example of the poor Macedonians; he reminds the Corinthians of the compassion of Christ; he shews that even a small offering is acceptable, if presented with a willing mind. He appeals to the bounty and sufficiency of God, as affording ample security for the supply of our wants; he sets before us the reward of grace awaiting the righteous; he paints in lively colours the gratitude of the poor saints; he refers to the benefit to be derived from their prayers, and to the common interest which is maintained by the reciprocal discharge of good offices; he shews how the honour of the christian profession is involved in it; and finally, he reminds us of the unspeakable gift of God. There are also some arguments of a more local nature, well adapted to the circumstances of the Corinthian church. He puts them in mind of the value of their spiritual privileges; of the readiness which they had shewn at first; of the importance of keeping up their high character for liberality; and of the connection between the exercise of beneficence, and the enjoyment of temporal prosperity. What stronger motives could be conceived! Let us also acknowledge their force, and “go and do likewise.”

2. Let us often reflect on the love of God, in sending his Son into the world, that we might live through him. No heart can conceive—no tongue can express, the value of this gift. It excites the admiration of angels, and it will constitute the burden of that new song which shall be sung by the ransomed throng through the ages of eternity: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us

from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER TENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—11.

PAUL VINDICATES HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

HITHERTO the Apostle had addressed that part of the Corinthian church, which had shewn a readiness to comply with the directions in his first Epistle, and to correct the disorders which he had pointed out. There was still, however, a party, headed by one or more factious teachers, who seemed determined to stand out, and who treated the Apostle's person, authority, and doctrine, with great contempt. To *these* he now adverts, in a style somewhat different from what he had previously used; and in this and the two following chapters, he asserts his authority as an Apostle of Christ, and adduces various proofs of his zeal and success in preaching the Gospel. This will account for the apparent severity of his language.

In the beginning of this chapter, he *intreats* them no longer to reject his authority and admonitions, which might be attended with serious consequences to themselves; and, waiving the language of intimidation, he appeals to the *mildness* and *clemency* of the Lord Jesus, who, though he was Lord of all, condescended to the meanest offices of love, and treated even his enemies with forbearance and pity: 1. "Now, I Paul myself beseech you, by the meekness (*πραότης*) and gentleness (*εὐσυνία*) of Christ, who

in presence (*κατα προσωπον*, according to appearance) am base (lowly or humble, *ταπεινός*) among you, but being absent am bold towards you." This amiable temper the Saviour had recommended to his followers by his own example, and this was the most affecting motive to the exercise of the same dispositions. Paul himself was especially desirous to imitate so bright an example; and the recollection of it was eminently calculated to expose the pride and arrogance of the false teachers. These men represented the Apostle as a person of *mean appearance*, and pusillanimous spirit, who was afraid to reprove the faults of others, *in their presence*, but assumed a high dictatorial style in speaking of them by letter, when at a *distance*, where no one could confront him. Thus they were pleased to consider the *humility* of Paul as the effect of cowardice, and his faithfulness as proceeding from presumptuous interference. Well; allowing their representation to be *correct*, or, to use their own language, he would avail himself of the privilege of writing *boldly* from a distance, to beseech them, that they would not, by their refractory conduct and ungenerous insinuations, lay him under the necessity, when present, of vindicating his apostolic authority, *by the exercise of those miraculous powers* which were conferred on him, for the conviction of unbelievers, and the punishment of obstinate opposers. This he calls being "bold towards them." 2. "And I pray (*δευμαι*) that I may not, when present, be bold with that confidence wherewith I think (or conclude, *λογιζομαι*) to be bold (*τολμησαι*) against some who judge of us, as (of persons) walking according to the flesh." Of this boldness we have an affecting instance in the miraculous punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts v. 5, 10.) and also in the case of Elymas the sorcerer, (chap. xiii. 11.) This extraordinary power the Apostle was very unwilling to exert, (ver. 8.); but it would be necessary to make an example of those who aimed at bringing his character or doctrine into contempt. They insinuated, that, notwithstanding all his boasted zeal and disinterestedness, and his confident assertions about the purity of his conduct and motives, he and his fellow-labourers were actuated by selfish and worldly principles, seeking only to establish an unwarrantable dominion over the minds of men, to secure their own advantage, or to gratify their evil passions. In other words, they considered them as persons "walking after the flesh."

The Apostle admitted, that he, in common with other men, was encompassed with infirmity, dwelling in a weak and sinful *body*, which demanded much care and attention, and hindered the ardour of his soul in the service of Christ. 3. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh." He was indeed engaged in a continual warfare, not only from the remains of corruption *within*, but from the discouragements and difficulties he was called to encounter from the world. But it was a *contest* of a very different nature from those carried on by worldly men. It was not for the destruction of men's lives, or for the dominion of their persons, or for the possession of their property: It was a conflict against ignorance, idolatry, superstition, vice, and misery. Its object was the salvation of men's souls, and its grand end the manifestation of the divine glory. It was not maintained to gratify ambition, or pride, or revenge. It was not conducted by fraud or violence. It was as holy in its principle, as it was glorious and merciful in its aim. Here there were no confused shouts of the warrior, or garments rolled in blood.

Accordingly, the *instruments* employed in this contest, were very opposite to those of human invention. 4, 5. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (*σαρκικά*, fleshly), but mighty through God (*τῷ Θεῷ*), to the pulling down of strong-holds: We overthrow reasonings (*λογισμοὺς καθαίρουντες*, *concilia destruentes*, *Vulgate*), and every high thing (*ὑψώματα*) that exalteth itself (or, passively, that is raised up, *επαυρομένον*) against the knowledge of God, and lead captive every imagination to the obedience of Christ." The allusions are all of a military nature. The human mind is here compared to a strongly fortified citadel, besieged by a hostile army, and assailed by powerful engines. By means of *these*, the lofty battlements are thrown down, the victorious enemy enters, and obliges the garrison to surrender. The Apostles made no use of the *temporal sword*. This was expressly prohibited by our Saviour, (John xviii. 36.) No violence is allowed, in the defence or propagation of the christian faith. Persecution will neither enlighten the conscience, nor convince the judgment. Carnal weapons may injure the body, but cannot affect the mind, and would be quite unsuitable to the servants of Him, whose kingdom is not of this world. The use of *fraud* is equally forbidden; for we must not do evil that good may come. No worldly compliances must be made, nor any temporal advantages held out to facilitate conversion. The weapons employed, were of a

spiritual nature; the exhibition of the doctrines of the Gospel, accompanied with the influences of the Holy Spirit, confirmed by miraculous powers, taught, in dependance on divine grace, with plainness, fidelity, and affection, followed with earnest prayer for the blessing of God, and enforced by a holy example. These weapons, inadequate as they appeared in the view of the world, were productive of the most astonishing effects. By means of them, the apostles were enabled to *overturn the strong holds* of Satan (*οχυρωματα*). Thus the walls of Jericho fell to the earth, at the sound of the rams' horns, and the shout of the multitude, (Joshua vi. 20.) Those systems of idolatry which had been reared with such amazing subtilty, which had stood for so many ages, and by which the human mind was kept in bondage, were overthrown by the simple preaching of the apostles of Christ. This is the more remarkable, when we consider that these systems were supported by the influence of priests and rulers, and were well adapted to gratify the passions of the multitude. The temples were deserted, the oracles were silenced, and the kingdom of Satan fell like lightning from heaven. In the same manner, the proud and subtile *reasonings* of the heathen philosophers were *refuted*, by the unlettered preachers of the Gospel; their plausible objections were answered, and their favourite theories of virtue were overturned. The opposition of the *Jews*, arising from their carnal prejudices and self-righteous hopes, shared the same fate: Thus every *high thing*—every lofty battlement raised by men against the humbling doctrines of the cross, was obliged to give way. The apparently impregnable fortress of the human heart was dismantled; a breach was made for the entrance of divine truth; resistance was no longer offered; *every imagination was captured* (*αγκλωπώζοντες*), and the whole of the intellectual and active powers were constrained to surrender in willing subjection to the authority of Christ. Not merely was an *external* reformation effected by the Gospel, but a complete moral revolution was accomplished in the *minds* of the disciples. Their heart, conversation, and character, were transformed. They cheerfully renounced the world, and professed the faith in the face of danger and of death. Men are still entrenched within numerous strong-holds; they are still disposed to raise up many lofty imaginations against the Gospel of Christ. The love of sin—the pursuits and pleasures of the world—the pride of self-righteousness—the vanity of human wisdom

—the power of unbelief, joined to the influence of the wicked one, form powerful obstacles to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. The awakened sinner often raises one bulwark behind another, and disputes every inch of ground, till obliged to yield to the force of conviction. Such has been the experience of many eminent christians, who have been led, after a long struggle, to surrender all their self-righteous and philosophical objections to the obedience of Christ. But the Gospel is indebted to a *divine power* for its success. It is mighty “through God.” The original expression, *δυνατα εν Θεω*, is rendered by Dr M’Knight, “exceedingly powerful,” understanding the phrase as a Hebraism, equivalent to the superlative degree; but the dative case often expresses the agency of the subject; and it is more agreeable to the general language of scripture, to suppose that the Apostle here alludes to the efficacy of divine grace accompanying the preaching of the Word. The Rhemish translators read, “mighty in God.”

But the apostles were furnished, not merely with suitable powers for the conviction of unbelievers:—They were also prepared to punish *professing christians*, in case of impenitence: 6. “And having in readiness (*ετοιμας*) to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (or completed, *πληρωθη*).” Those who submitted to reproof, and returned to their duty, would escape further censure; but the refractory part of the church would be made manifest, and would expose themselves to those miraculous judgments which the Apostle was prepared to inflict. The factious teachers, and disorderly members, were disposed to form their estimate of character by external appearances. They valued themselves on their birth, learning, eloquence, and even on the gracefulness of their persons; a quality which generally commands the admiration of the multitude; and they despised the Apostle on account of his inferiority, in regard to these outward accomplishments. But was this a proper rule of judging? 7. “Do ye look on things according to the appearance (*κατα προσωπον*)? If any man trusts (*πιστευει*, *confidit*—*Vulg.*) in himself that he is Christ’s, let him think, (or reason, *λογιζωθω*) this again from (or with, *αφ*) himself, that as he is Christ’s, so also are we Christ’s.” If the false teachers confidently rested their claim, as ministers of Christ, on such advantages as these, let them again use their boasted powers of reasoning in a candid manner, and

they would perceive (of themselves) that Paul possessed evidences of a far higher order, to prove that he was a servant of Christ, as well as they. Dr M'Knight observes, that "the Apostle does not here acknowledge the false teacher to be a faithful minister of Christ. He had taken on himself the work of the ministry, and was by profession a servant of Christ. This Paul acknowledged, without entering into the consideration of his faithfulness."

If he were obliged to be more explicit on these topics, than was usual or agreeable to him, in order to maintain his apostolic authority, it would be found that he had not exaggerated or misrepresented facts: 8. "For though I should boast somewhat more abundantly (*μεγαλύτερον*) concerning our power, which the Lord hath given us for (your) edification, and not for your destruction (*καταστροφή*, overthrow,) I should not be ashamed." Here he evidently alludes to those miraculous powers which were conferred on the apostles for the confirmation of their message. These, agreeably to the genius of Christianity, were, in general, to be employed for merciful purposes, in building up the church of God; yet, in the case of presumptuous offenders, they might be exercised in a way of judgment, though these instances were comparatively rare. He would, however, waive the subject for the present, lest it should be thought he wished to alarm them by his bold language: 9. "That I may not seem as if I would terrify you with epistles," (*Doddridge*.) In these words he alludes, ironically, to those who acknowledged the force of his writings, but affected to despise the meanness of his personal appearance, and the unadorned simplicity of his preaching. 10. "For his epistles (say they) are weighty and strong (*σχυρα*), but his bodily presence (*σώματος τού σκευόςτος*, the presence of his body) is weak, and his speech contemptible, (*αδικοκλήσιμος*)." It has been thought that the Apostle was somewhat ungraceful in person, and that his voice was weak, and his manner of delivery unpopular. To these defects he seems to allude, Gal. iv. 14. "My temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not nor rejected." Whatever this might be, it rendered his ministry less acceptable among prejudiced and unthinking persons. This accounts for the taunting language of his adversaries. Dr Mac-knight thinks the Apostle alludes to his first letter to the Corinthians, and remarks that both the Greeks and Romans gave the

name of *letters* to one letter. But he had already written several epistles besides this, to various churches, "according to the wisdom given unto him," which might be included in this admission; and though the Greeks used *γραμματα*, and the Latins *literæ*, for a single letter, the word *ἐπιστολή*, in both languages, properly signifies, in the plural number, more than one. The remarks of the factious teachers on the personal infirmities of the Apostle, only exposed their weakness and vanity. Defects of this kind are subjects neither of praise nor blame, because they are *involuntary*; neither do they affect the truth of sentiments uttered by the speaker. Perhaps they only alluded to his humble demeanour and attire, and to his neglect of the studied ornaments of oratory, such as the proper modulation of the voice, graceful action, and harmonious style. To such objectors he replies, that they would find him as firm and decided in his *personal address*, as they allowed him to be in his *writings*. 11. "Let such an one consider (or reason, *λογιζέσθω*) this, that what (*εἰς*) we are, in word, by letters when absent, such shall we be in deed (*ἐν ἔργῳ*) when we are present." On this verse, Mr Parkhurst observes, "By the Apostle's thus repeating the word *λογιζέσθαι* again and again in this chapter, it should seem that the opposers of the Gospel, here alluded to, were like most of their brethren in modern times, great pretenders to reason and argument."

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us think of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, when exposed to provocation, or about to correct a fault. This will preserve us from undue severity, and will suppress all harsh and irritating language. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," (1 Pet. ii. 23.) "Learn of me, (says the divine Saviour), for I am meek and lowly of heart." Without this, we only weaken the cause we intend to advocate; for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

2. How foolish and unreasonable the objections which are often brought against christian teachers! If nothing can be said to the prejudice of their doctrine or character, these cavillers will object to their outward appearance—to the defect of their education—to the simplicity of their language, or the weakness of their

voice! In these circumstances, it is of the utmost importance to maintain firmness and decision of character. "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe," (Prov. xxix. 25.) The letters of this illustrious apostle are indeed (his enemies being judges) *weighty* and *powerful*; What force of reasoning, beauty of sentiment, eloquence of style, and fervour of piety, are every where conspicuous! Yet, neither his talents nor his piety could secure him from the shafts of calumny; and he soon found, what every faithful preacher must expect to find, that the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.

3. We are encouraged to hope for the universal diffusion of the Gospel. If we except miraculous gifts, the servants of Christ now go forth to assault the strong-holds of Satan, with the same weapons which were employed by the apostles. Shall we despair of success? We have no reason to do so. Christianity has already triumphed over the most powerful prejudices, and inveterate habits. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," (Isa. xl. 4, 5.) Has the Gospel subdued our proud reasonings and corrupt propensities? Let us ascribe the praise to God. And O may the Spirit of the Lord open the hearts of those who hear the word of Life, to attend to the things that are spoken; and bring the hardened infidel, the vain sceptic, and the thoughtless libertine, to submit to the authority of Christ, and to abandon all their refuges of lies!

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 12—18.

THE PROPER RULE OF JUDGING.

THE Apostle had adverted to the mean opinion entertained of him by the factious teachers in the Corinthian church. They affected to despise his doctrine and his *personal presence*, while they boasted of their superior knowledge and eloquence. He

now observes, in a style of irony, that he would not *presume* to rank himself with persons of such eminent gifts and abilities as they pretended to be; or, seriously, he would not *venture* to follow their example, or to adopt their rule of judging, as it was both unreasonable and dangerous: 12. "For we dare not number (*υψηλῶς*) or compare (*συγκρίνειν*) ourselves with some who commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by (or among, *ἐν*) themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise." Instead of *comparing* their doctrine and character with the standard of divine truth, and *measuring* their attainments and usefulness by those of the accredited ambassadors of Christ, and others of acknowledged eminence in the church, they set themselves up as a standard by which to judge both themselves and others, and compared their characters and labours only with those of individuals of their own stamp. This led them to entertain an undue conceit of themselves, and to form an erroneous estimate of other men, for it was evident "they did not understand" (*οὐ συνένοιον*) their own character. There is not a more fruitful source of error, than to judge of persons and opinions by our own prejudices. It is said of an eastern prince, that he ridiculed the idea of water being rendered solid by freezing. We can easily conceive what inadequate conceptions a savage would form of the arts of civilized life, by comparing them with those of his own country. This remark is capable of extensive application. Every class of society forms an imaginary rule of conduct for itself. It has been remarked, that even robbers and murderers have certain notions of honour which they would deem it improper to transgress.* How common is it for persons to judge of their religious character by the opinions and maxims of the world around them! But how different is the rule of God's word! How often do we hear individuals congratulating themselves, that they are free from certain vices, and are punctual in the observance of certain duties, who are, at the same time, utterly ignorant of the spirituality and extent of the divine law! They compare themselves with those of similar, or even of inferior, character; they vainly imagine, that because their own conduct is unimpeachable, in the view of *man*, they have nothing to fear from

* See this thought forcibly illustrated in a discourse on this text by the Rev. Dr Chalmers.

the scrutiny of their final Judge; their prejudices will not suffer them to apply the true standard, or even to observe the superior attainments of many around them. Hence they remain strangers to their real character and situation, as sinners exposed to the wrath of God; they labour to establish a righteousness of their own; they reject the free offers of the Gospel; they despise the great atonement, and treat the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit as irrational or absurd. This is the greatest barrier in the way of men's salvation. The Vulgate gives quite a different turn to the verse we have been considering: The last clause is rendered, "*sed ipsi in nobis nosmetipsos metientes et comparantes nos metipsos nobis;*" which is thus translated in the Rhemish version, "but we measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves with ourselves." Thus the words *se unusquis* are entirely omitted, and the reciprocal pronoun is made to express the first person. According to *this* sense, the Apostle means to say, that he formed a correct estimate of himself, by making his actual attainments the standard of judging; but there is no authority for omitting the words before mentioned; and the former view is the more natural.

The Apostle next compares the preachers of the Gospel to *labourers*, who have a certain portion of work marked out to each by their overseer, and whose duty it is to keep within the boundary line, so as neither to neglect *their own* part, nor to interfere with the portion of their fellow-labourers. In what Paul was about to say on the subject of his own exertions, he would carefully *observe the measure* which had been assigned to him by the Lord of the vineyard: 13. "But we will not boast of things not measured (*απομετρον*), but according to the measure of the line (*μετρον*) which God hath distributed (or allotted, *μετρον*) to us, a measure to reach even unto you." The God of measure (as some translate the words: *ὁ θεὸς μετρον*), had commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles; and the *Corinthians*, among others, were included *within* the line measured out to him. In claiming them, therefore, as a part of his allotted work, he did not go beyond his line, for he could appeal to themselves that he had travelled as far as to Corinth, and had first planted Christianity in that city: 14. "For we stretch not ourselves beyond (our bounds, *ἐκπερισσεύοντες*) as not reaching to you; for we are come as far as to you also, in preaching the Gospel of Christ (or with the Gospel, *καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*).

γλίσσῃ)." Moreover, in extending his labours thus far, he had not been neglectful of the intervening country. As he observes in his Epistle to the Romans, (chap. xv. 19.) "From Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ." He was not, like the false teachers, easily discouraged with the difficulties which they met with in new places, and rather disposed to leave their work unfinished, and to intrude into those stations where the Gospel was already introduced. Thus they entered on *other men's labours*, and then boasted of their success, as if they had been the first to proclaim the word of life in those places. But the Apostle so aimed to preach the Gospel where it was before *unknown*, and "not where Christ was named, lest he should build on another man's foundation," Rom. xv. 20.; and he indulged the hope, that, after they had been further instructed and established in the *faith*, he might, with safety, leave them to the care of their ordinary pastors, and pursue his labours in more distant countries, such as Italy and Spain, whither he intended to go. In the execution of this undertaking, he expected that the Corinthians would afford him encouragement and assistance, by their prayers and contributions, so as to enable him to avail himself of the full measure of his line: 15, 16. "We do not boast of things not measured, in other men's labours (ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κοίτοις), but we have hope, that when your faith is increased (αὐξανόμενης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν), we shall be enlarged (μεγαλυνησόμεθα) by you, according to our rule, abundantly to preach the Gospel in the (regions) beyond you (ὑπερθεσίων), and not to boast in another man's line, (or boundary, πᾶν) of things already prepared (ἑτοιμα)."
 Thus he would carefully avoid interfering with the exertions of other christian brethren, and would not seek to deprive them of the credit of their own labour. It is the mark of a party spirit to intrude into places where the Gospel is already fully and faithfully preached, in order to draw away disciples from pious and zealous pastors. Thus divisions are unnecessarily multiplied, and the hands of faithful ministers are weakened. It is a dishonourable thing thus to take the praise of another man's labours. In this view, those preachers are most honoured who are called to go forth among heathen nations. These can enter into the true spirit of this passage. But we are surely not to infer, from what is here said, that wherever men are nominally under the ministry of

others, it is wrong to use any further means for their conversion. Their religious instruction may be wilfully neglected, or they may be taught erroneous doctrine, or it may be impossible, from the extent of the parish, for the ordinary minister to reach the full measure of his line. The question to be considered is, are they ignorant of the way of salvation? Are they living without God in the world? Then they must not be left to perish in ignorance—there Christ, in fact, is *not named*. It is not the interest of a party, but the salvation of souls that is then sought. This is undeniably the situation of thousands in our own country, and renders the labours of itinerants highly necessary and useful.

Paul, however, did not wish to ascribe any praise to *himself* in what he had done. He was only an instrument in the hand of God. Therefore he would ascribe all the honour to Him who had rendered his ministry effectual. He gloried in *Christ* as his all-sufficient Saviour, the foundation of his hope, and the Author of all his gifts and usefulness: And, as a general rule, he would recommend the renunciation of every other object of confidence, whether wealth, honour, learning, talents, or benevolent dispositions. 17. "But let him that glorieth (or boasteth), glory in the Lord." We have already considered this sentiment, which is quoted from Isaiah xlv. 25., when discoursing on the first epistle, (chap. i. 30, 31.) It is of the same import with Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Finally, he observes, that *self-commendation* will never prove a man acceptable to God; *they* only are *approved* whom the unerring Judge shall commend: 18. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved (*δοκιμαζομενος*) but whom the Lord commendeth." Alas! how many are there who are ready to commend themselves. This seems to have been the case with the factious teachers in the church at Corinth; but it is equally true of the self-righteous pharisee—the proud speculatist—the lukewarm professor of the Gospel—and the cold formalist. Even the gay libertine "blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst," (Deut. xxix. 19.) Thus they put the evil day far from them, and go down to the grave with a lie in their right hand. But who are they who are approved of God?

Those only who believe in the name of his beloved Son, and who are taught by divine grace to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. If we examine *particular traits* of character, it will be found that the upright—the poor in spirit—the contrite in heart—the meek and the merciful, are commended by the Lord. (Matt. v. 3—10.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us no longer trust to our own good opinion, or to the commendation of the world ; but sensible of the deceitfulness of our own heart, and of the vast importance of forming a correct estimate of our character, let us adopt the prayer of the Psalmist, “ Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,” (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.) How lamentable is the condition of those, who have made lies their refuge, and under falsehood have hid themselves ! “ Judgment shall be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.” May the Lord awaken all such to a discovery of their danger, and lead them to build on that sure foundation which is laid in Zion ! (Isa. xxviii. 15—17.)

2. Let the ministers of Christ diligently cultivate the portion assigned them by their Lord, and let those who are so happy as to be unfettered by any *ecclesiastical restrictions*, avail themselves of the full measure of their line, by carrying the message of salvation into every city and village within the sphere of their influence ; till the vast moral wilderness of this world, rejoice and blossom like the rose.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—12.

PAUL RELUCTANTLY COMMENDS HIMSELF.

THE Apostle had alluded to his extensive labours in the vineyard of the Lord, ascribing, at the same time, all his success to divine influence. He had already admitted, that “not he who commendeth *himself* is approved;” but the unjust aspersions of the false teachers made it necessary that he should stand forward, however reluctantly, in his own vindication; and if, in what he was about to advance, he should seem to overstep the bounds of modesty or propriety, it must be attributed to the necessity of the case, not to a vain-glorious disposition. They might esteem it *foolishness* in him to say so much in his own praise; yet it was of the utmost importance to maintain his apostolic authority; and he would therefore beseech them to suffer his seeming *indiscretion* for a short time, while he explained, more fully, the principles on which he acted, and the difficulties he had to encounter as an ambassador of Christ: 1. “I wish (ὀφείλω) ye could bear with me a little in my folly, (μου μικροὶ τι τῆς ἀφροσύνης, some little of my foolishness—*Macknight*; so the *Vulgate*, *modicum quod insipientiæ meæ*) yea, even (ἀλλὰ καὶ) bear with me.” He could not but feel great anxiety on their account, as he had been the honoured instrument of bringing them to the knowledge of the truth: 2. “For I am jealous (ζῆλω) of you with a godly jealousy (a zeal of God, Θεοῦ ζῆλος); for I have betrothed (ἑξμετάμην, prepared—*Parkhurst*) you to one husband, to present you a chaste (or pure, ἁγνή) virgin unto Christ.” By embracing the Gospel, they had been introduced into an honourable and endearing relationship to the Lord Jesus. They had been, in fact, *betrothed* to

He is the *head* and *head* of the church; and therefore it was His will that we should love, and obey Him alone, and to keep His commandments, both in doctrine and practice (1 John iii. 3). These could be viewed in no other light than as acts of spiritual adultery, and would render us unworthy of the glorious distinction conferred upon the church. The church well deserved their entire devotedness of Christ. He loved the church and gave himself for it; she is the bride, the Lamb's wife, and she is destined to dwell with Him forever. (Rev. xix. 7-9.; xxi. 9.) The Jewish church was spoken of under this figure, (Is. liv. 1. Hosea ii. 19. Ps. cxxviii. 11.) To the same privilege the Gentiles had succeeded (Eph. v. 25-27.) The Corinthians had been *contracted* to Christ by the instrumentality of the Apostle, who had used the greatest care, by delivering to them the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel in their purity, to *prepare* them as a *chaste virgin* for the society of the glorious Bridegroom. This last idea is thought to be included in the word *ἡμεροσμεν*, and it is confirmed, if we consider that at the court of Eastern princes, certain officers were appointed to prepare the royal bride, (Esther ii. 14.) and it was the object of Paul's ardent desire, that he might present them at the final day, "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." How careful should Christian pastors be to instruct their people in the genuine doctrine of the Gospel, and to admit those only into the church, who seem to have renounced the service of sin, and to be wholly devoted to Christ! And how careful should the members of the church be, lest their minds should be corrupted by false doctrine, or their hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

In reference to this point, it would be well for them to profit by the example of the common mother of mankind: 3. "But I beseech you by all means (*κατα*), as the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness (*εἰς πᾶσαν*), so your minds (*νοῦς*) should be corrupted by the craftiness that is in (or towards, *εἰς*) Christ." The *Mosaic* account of the fall is here referred to, as a plain narrative of how the first created creature, though created like Adam in the image of God, a rational creature, had been *seduced* (*ἐξαπατήσθαι*) into disobedience through the *craftiness* of Satan, assuming the form of a *serpent* (*ὄφις*), and had thus entailed guilt and

wretchedness on all her posterity; and the Apostle was apprehensive lest they should fall into a similar snare. The same enemy was still busy in promoting his designs, either by direct influence, or by the agency of his ministers; at one time seeking to devour the flock of Christ like a roaring lion, and at another, silently undermining their faith with the subtlety of a serpent. In this latter character he is especially dangerous, and it behoved them, therefore, to be sober and vigilant. They must beware of being misled by the pretensions or promises of false teachers, who might endeavour to draw them off from a *simple dependence on the Saviour*. They must also be on their guard, lest they should corrupt the faith with human devices, or philosophical subtleties, and by seeking to *adorn* the Gospel, mar its purity, obscure its simplicity, and build on a false foundation.

They would, indeed, have some reason for giving a favourable reception to the false teachers, if *they* could communicate a more correct or valuable system of doctrine. 4. "For if indeed (*εἰ μὴ γάρ*) he that cometh (*εἰς ὑμᾶς*, is come, *M'Knight*) preach another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or (if) ye have received another (*ἄλλον*, different) Spirit which ye have not received (from us), or another Gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with (him, or with me.)" If they could point out a more powerful, glorious, and suitable *Saviour*, than Jesus of Nazareth, whom Paul had made known to them; or communicate spiritual gifts of a more salutary and efficacious nature, and direct them to a more effectual teacher and guide, than that Divine *Spirit*, by whose influences the preaching of the Apostle was confirmed; or proclaim a more safe and honourable way of salvation, than that revealed in the *Gospel*; then, no doubt, it would be their duty gladly to bear with such teachers, and thankfully to receive their proffered gifts; though even in *that* case, charity would teach them to bear with the infirmities of their first instructor. But this was very far from being the fact. Paul could boldly challenge these vain pretenders, to shew a more excellent way, or to produce more evident credentials of divine authority. What proof of apostleship could even the most eminent leaders in the church present, which *he* had not afforded among them? Whether they judged by their doctrine, miracles, spiritual gifts, or by the abundance and success of their labours; or whether they regarded their piety, devotion, or zeal—in all these respects, he had

no reason to fear a comparison. 5. "For I suppose (λογίζομαι, I conclude), I am nothing behind (" *Nihil me minus faciasse*,—*Vulgate*, I have done nothing less than") the very chief (των ἀποστόλων) apostles." Here he seems to refer to the artful insinuation of the factious teachers, who pretended that Paul was but partially instructed in the christian doctrine, while they had received their knowledge from Peter, and James, and John, whom they were pleased to represent as the pillars of the church. It has been justly observed, that all idea of *supremacy*, as lodged in any of the apostles, is here disclaimed; for if Paul was [in no respect inferior, they could claim no *higher* dignity or authority.

It is very true, he did not cultivate the art of rhetoric, or possess the same external accomplishments with some others, in regard to voice, gesture, or person; he spoke with great plainness and simplicity, as a *private individual*; though in his manner there was nothing like *rudeness*, in the common acceptation of the term. But he had never shewn any deficiency in his acquaintance with christian doctrine. 6. "For even if I be rude (διωτικῶς, an unlettered person, *M'Knight*) in speech, yet not in knowledge; but on every occasion (ὡς παντοῦ) we have been made manifest among (or to, ὑμῖν) you in all things." He could appeal to themselves, that he had kept back nothing that was profitable, and had not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God; and both by his teaching and by his example, he had shewn himself (φανερῶντις) to be a faithful servant of Christ.

The only thing in which he differed from other christian teachers, was, that he had refused to receive maintenance while engaged in preaching at Corinth; and this was the only distinction which he had made between the Corinthians and other churches. 7. "Have I committed an offence (ἁμαρτίαν) in humbling (ταπεινῶν) myself, that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? (δωρεάν, as a free gift)." Must this generosity of spirit be imputed to him as a crime? Had he not power, according to circumstances, either to waive his privilege as an Apostle, or to avail himself of it? He had submitted to the *necessity* of labouring with his own hands, that he might be enabled to preach to them gratuitously. This he did to *promote their spiritual good*; that he might not hinder the success of his ministry; and yet, on this account, some were ready to despise

him, and even to call in question the fact of his apostleship. But he had particular reasons for thus acting. Corinth was a rich and flourishing city, and he wished that his labours should appear disinterested. There were also *divisions* among them, and he would receive nothing as "a matter of covetousness," or by constraint. When, therefore, he could not find time to labour with his hands, or when the supplies thus raised, were inadequate to his support, instead of raising contributions from the Corinthians, he was assisted by the liberality of other churches. This he pleasantly calls *spoiling* them; as they were not, at the time, enjoying the benefit of his ministry; and the help thus obtained, in allusion to the military pay of the Roman soldiers, he denominates *wages*. 8. "I robbed (*εὐλόγησα*) other churches, taking *wages* (*οὐλοῖαι*, stipendiam) from them, to do you service, (*πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν*, *ad ministerium vestrum*. *Vulgate*)." The Apostle did not conceive himself entitled to remuneration, where no actual service was performed. Even in his greatest straits, he was determined, while at Corinth, not to *press* heavily on any one, and chose rather to accept the bounty of the Macedonian churches, who sent some of their brethren to minister to his necessities, and by whose kindness he was furnished with every thing needful. 9. "And when I was present with you, and in want (*ὀλιγοψύχως*), I was chargeable to no man; for that which was wanting to me (*τὸ ὀλιγοψύχον μου*, my deficiency) the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied (*προσέσκηψαν*), and in every thing I have kept myself from being burdensome (*σβαρα*) to you, and so will I keep (myself)." The word *κατασκήνω* is very expressive. It properly signifies to *benumb*, or, as we should say, to lie as a dead weight upon any one. Dr Doddridge observes, "Beza would render it, *I was not idle at any man's expense*. The word *κατασκήνω* implies a benumbed inactive state, a kind of torpor to which no man seems to be less obnoxious than St Paul." In his Epistle to the Philippians, (chap. iv. 15.) the Apostle makes honourable mention of the liberality of these Macedonian christians, both on this and on other occasions. "Now, Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel (that is, at its introduction into those places,) when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only: For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity." By accepting of their gift, even in Corinth, he shewed his disappro-

bation of the factious and worldly spirit of the christians in that city, and honoured the pious zeal and affectionate generosity of the poor Macedonians, (chap. viii. 1, 2.) On this principle he had formerly acted, and he was determined still to persevere in the same resolution ; nor would he suffer any man in the district of Achaia to deprive him, either by persuasion or threatening, of the pleasure which he derived from reflecting on his disinterested conduct, while in that country. This declaration he solemnly confirms by an appeal to his knowledge of the christian doctrine, or to his personal experience of the truth of the Gospel. 10. "As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting shall not be restrained, (*φεινησεται*, violated, *Doddridge*,) with respect to (*μενε*) me, in the regions of Achaia." Was this cautious procedure to be imputed to a want of affection for them? No; he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that this was far from being the case; but he wished, in this manner, to cut off all pretence from his adversaries, for accusing him of a selfish and mercenary spirit, which they were eager to do, in order to cloak their own covetous designs. 11, 12. "Wherefore? because I do not love you? God knoweth: But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off (*αποψησω*) occasion (*αφορμη*, opportunity) from them that desire occasion, that wherein they boast, they may be found even as we." These artful men boasted of their disinterested conduct, though they did not scruple to make heavy demands on their disciples in private: But it would afford a more convincing proof of their sincerity, were they honestly to copy the example of the Apostle, instead of contenting themselves with an empty *boast*. Then, indeed, they would be found *as he was*; but he knew too well their indolent and voluptuous disposition, to fear any competition of this nature.

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is painful to a generous mind to be under the necessity of speaking in one's own commendation. Yet the wisest and best of men are sometimes obliged to incur the charge of indiscretion, by so doing, in order to vindicate the cause of truth, to refute the calumnies of enemies, and to put a stop to injurious insinuations. Even when compelled, however, to speak or write in self-defence, the servant of Christ will evince the greatest reluctance, will

avoid all unnecessary severity, or personal invective, and will rejoice when he is enabled to appeal to the general tenor of his conduct, as a triumphant answer to the charges of those who *desire* an occasion against him.

2. The whole argument of this passage goes on the supposition, that the ministers of Christ are *entitled* to a reasonable maintenance from their people. Unless this be admitted, we cannot suppose, that a man of so noble and generous a spirit as Paul, would have received supplies from *any church*. But so well was this right understood, that to decline accepting the usual tokens of dutiful esteem, was imputed to a want of love. Let us not, however, undervalue those teachers who may find it expedient or necessary, to labour with their own hands. Let us beware of the arts of those, who, under specious pretences, would corrupt our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. "Believe not every spirit, (says the beloved Apostle,) but try the spirits whether they be of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world," (1 Epis. iv. 1.) "If we, or an angel from heaven, (says the Apostle Paul,) preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached, let him be accursed," (Gal. i. 8.) "Beware (says our Saviour) of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits," (Matt. vii. 15, 16.)

3. How great the honour of being espoused to Christ! What steadfastness of faith, ardour of love, and purity of conduct, should distinguish those who are partakers of this glorious privilege! How careful should they be to exclude all rivals in their affection, and to live entirely devoted to Him, who has purchased the church with his own blood: He is worthy of their supreme affection. If we depend simply on Him, he will bruise Satan under our feet shortly, and admit us to that celestial Paradise, where that subtle serpent shall no more corrupt our minds, or wound our consciences, with his destructive wiles.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSSES 13—21.

CHARACTER OF THE FALSE TEACHERS.

THE Apostle had vindicated his conduct in preaching the Gospel at Corinth free of cost. This he had done, chiefly with a view to expose the rapacious and worldly spirit of the factious teachers, who affected to despise him, at one time, as an obscure and illiterate person, and at another, to fear him as a man of deep policy and close ambition. There was indeed little hope of their imitating his disinterestedness and self-denial; for notwithstanding their high pretensions, they were utterly unworthy of the name of christian teachers: 13. "For such are false apostles, (*ψευδοπροφῆται*) deceitful workmen, (*εργαται δολοι*), transforming themselves into apostles of Christ (*μετασχηματίζονται*, middle voice)." They boasted that they were divinely commissioned to preach the Gospel, as well as the genuine ambassadors of Christ; but they were *spurious apostles*; they were neither sent nor acknowledged by Him, as his servants. To them might be addressed the language of God to the instructors of ancient Israel: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied," (Jer. xxiii. 21.) They had intruded into the vineyard of the Lord, and professed to be laborious and faithful husbandmen; they pretended to build up the church of Christ, under the character of skilful artificers; but they were *deceitful workers*; their whole aim was to undermine the sacred edifice, and to sow tares among the wheat; they wanted to secure their own emolument and influence, by beguiling the hearts of the simple. They assumed the *apostolic character*, and claimed the same deference and authority that belonged to that sacred office; but the whole tendency of their exertions was to counteract the labours of Christ's acknowledged servants, and to substitute, in room of their doctrine, a mode of teaching more adapted to flatter the pride, and to foster the depravity of the human mind; they were, in fact, merely playing a part.

Nor was there any thing *incredible* in this, though it was greatly to be deplored. The best things are liable to be abused

by wicked and designing men, in order to accomplish their own ends ; nay, the more excellent any system of religion is, the more eager are such persons to avail themselves of it, just as coins of the greatest value are most frequently imitated. They have learned this art of dissimulation from the prince of darkness, whose agents they are. 14, 15. "And no wonder, (οὐ θαυμάσιον) for Satan himself is transformed, (or, in the middle voice, μεταρρυθμαίνεται) transformeth himself—*M'Knight*: so the Vulg. *transfiguratur se*) into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing (οὐ μέγα) if his ministers also are transformed as ministers of righteousness, of whom (οὗ) the end shall be according to their works." This arch deceiver has in all ages assumed a *specious appearance*, the more effectually to decoy the souls of men into his snares. Thus he appeared to our first mother (as before hinted, ver. 3.) in the character of a pure and holy spirit, *as an angel of light*, pretending to point out to her the path of wisdom and honour, and affecting to interest himself in her superior happiness. Thus, too, did he transform himself, when he appeared to our Saviour in the wilderness of Judea, (Matt. iv. 3.), and suggested to him, while faint with hunger, an apparently easy and harmless method of supplying his wants: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." To heighten the deception, he appealed, on that occasion, to the authority of the Scriptures, (ver. 6.) In this manner, he has been too successful in tempting men to reject, corrupt, or abuse the Gospel: He suggests to some, that its doctrines are mysterious or contradictory ; he leads others to ingraft upon it many ceremonies of human invention, by way of rendering it more suited to the capacities of the weak ; he influences many to turn the doctrines of grace into licentiousness, or, under pretence of securing the interests of morality, prejudices their minds against the doctrine of justification by faith. Under the same influence, we see men pretending to new revelations, or sensible impulses, by which their attention is withdrawn from the sure prophetic word ; we see them confounding transient impressions on the senses, with genuine conversion ; or pleading for the indulgence of sin under pretence of liberty, or as the mark of a generous spirit. Thus does the patron of error and wickedness act the part of a subtle fowler, who carefully conceals the snare. He resembles the crafty impostor, who assumes the character of an honest man,

in order to elude suspicion. Were he to appear in his true character, as the destroyer of souls, all men would flee from him. Mankind follow the ways of sin, because they hope for greater good in the indulgence of their passions, than in restraining them.

Such being the policy of Satan, it is no great cause of wonder if his *servants* should give themselves out as the ministers of *righteousness*, and profess to seek the true interest of men. Thus the mere moralist brands the doctrines of the Gospel as unfriendly to the cultivation of virtue: The deist and the socinian affect to consider them as irrational: The antinomian, while he abuses christian liberty for an occasion to the flesh, professes to magnify the riches of sovereign grace: Even the *man of sin* sitteth in the temple of God. But all of them alike oppose the doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of Christ, as invariably connected with the regeneration of the heart by the Holy Spirit, as the only ground of admission into the kingdom of heaven. The ministers of Satan may boast of their superior illumination,—of their greater liberty,—of their higher hopes; but they all await the judgment of Him, who regards not the person of any, who cannot be deceived or flattered, and who will reward every man, not according to his professions, but *according to his works*. They shall eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices.

Some might think the Apostle *foolish*, for speaking so much in his own praise: But the necessity of vindicating his character, would fully justify him in the opinion of all candid and thinking persons. 16. "I say again, Let no man think me a fool, (*αφεως*, unwise, inconsiderate—*insipientem*, *Vulg.*); but if otherwise, (*αδελφοι*) yet, as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little." If any one should still choose to maintain an unfavourable opinion of him on this account, he would not contend with him; let him even *bear with him* (*διεσθης με*) under the character of a vain-glorious man: he must say something more in his own vindication; and he would only ask, not whether what he was about to say were strictly agreeable to *decorum*, but whether it were not consistent with *truth*? It might indeed seem unsuitable to the example of the meek and lowly Saviour thus to speak—It might even have the appearance of setting aside his repeated injunctions against pride and self-confidence: 17. "What I speak, I speak not

after the Lord, (*κατὰ Κόρον*, after the manner of our Lord), but, as it were in foolishness (*ἡ ἀφροσύνη*), in this confidence of boasting." The Apostle surely does not mean to deny that he spoke under the inspiration of the Spirit ; and therefore there seems no occasion for the admission which Dr Doddridge here makes in his paraphrase, " I speak not by any immediate direction or inspiration from Christ." His enemies might even charge him with imitating those whom he condemned as self-applauders. Still, however, he would claim to be heard in his own defence. Some think, that, in this verse, he ironically turns the words of the factious teachers against themselves, who accused him of speaking without authority *from Christ*, in commendation of himself.

If, however, he should appear to boast of external distinctions, he would at least not be singular. There were *others* who had no other advantages to boast of ; and he would for once meet them on their own ground. 18. " Seeing many glory according to (*κατὰ*) the flesh, I will glory also." If in this he should appear unwise, he would only add *one* to the number of *fools* by whom they were already guided, in the midst of all their boasted wisdom. And men of *their* superior discernment could surely be in no great danger from one of his weak capacity : 19. " For ye suffer fools gladly, (*ἡδίστως*) (ye yourselves) being wise." They had submitted with admirable patience and *cheerfulness* to the captious humours and arbitrary measures of their new instructors : they were, in fact, so completely under their power, as to be afraid to think or act for themselves, lest they should give offence to their imperious masters : 20. " For ye suffer (or bear it, *ἡσυχῶς*) if one enslave (*καταδουλέω*) you, if one devour you, if one take of you, if one exalt himself, if one smite you on the face." They had brought themselves into sad *bondage* to these cruel task-masters, who vainly promised them liberty. They suffered themselves to be defrauded and *impoverished* by the repeated exactions of these men, who seemed as if they would eat up all that they had, (*καταβιβῶ*). They stripped them of their property (*λαμβάνω*) to support themselves in indolent luxury. They assumed an air of haughtiness (*ἐκπαίττω*) utterly unbecoming the servants of the lowly Saviour ; nay, he supposed that if they should, in a fit of passion, so far forget their sacred office as to *smite them on the face* (*ὡς προσώποι λαβῶ*), they would be so infatuated by their blind attachment, as to entertain no suspicion of their real principles, or think the

worse of them on that account. Since they were daily meeting with such contemptuous treatment, they might at least endure the folly of the Apostle for a little, while he recounted his labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ. It is not necessary to suppose that the factious teachers went the whole length here *hypothetically* described; but the Apostle's language is remarkably cutting; and nothing could be better fitted to bring the refractory part of the church to a sense of their great weakness, in allowing themselves to become the dupes of unprincipled men. What he was about to say, was in reference to the *reproachful accusation* brought against him, as if he had been a weak and contemptible person: 21 "I speak concerning the reproach, that we were weak, (so Dr. M'Knight renders the words, *κατὰ ἀνικητὸν λόγον, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήσαμεν*); but in what any one is confident (*ταλμῆς*), I speak foolishly, I am confident also." He would shew them, that he was not, by such insinuations, to be deterred from discharging his duty. As to outward distinctions, in which they gloried so much, though he was not disposed to lay much stress on such things, he had as much ground of boasting as they had. Mr. Scott observes, that, in the comparison which follows, Paul does not merely prove himself equal to the factious teachers, which would have been but a poor distinction, but he illustrates the position formerly laid down, (ver. 5.) that, "in nothing he was behind the chief of the apostles."

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is our duty to examine the doctrine and the conduct of those who profess to be christian teachers. The Apostle knew nothing of that spurious charity which levels all distinctions of character and opinion. He knew not to give flattering titles to any man, and withstood even Peter to the face, when he was to be blamed. "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isa. v. 20.

2. Those who boast of superior wisdom, are often chargeable with the greatest weakness; and this is especially seen in their blind submission to their favourite leaders. What inconsistencies do the *rational* Socinians believe, on no better authority, than the *ipse dixit* of their boasted commentators! They profess to

acknowledge the Scriptures as a divine revelation, yet hold themselves at liberty to sit in judgment on the opinions of the inspired writers, and to reject or admit them, as may best suit their preconceived ideas! In reading the 20th verse, one would imagine that the Apostle had drawn the picture of those who, for many ages, claimed the title of christian ministers in the idolatrous church of Rome. How did they enslave, devour, and persecute the heritage of God!

SECTION THIRD.—VERSES 22—33.

PAUL'S SUFFERINGS.

THE factious teachers in the Corinthian church had boasted of their superiority to the Apostle, which obliged him, though with great reluctance, to speak in his own behalf: though he was not disposed to glory in external privileges, yet, as they laid so much stress on these things, he was constrained to shew that, even in respect of such distinctions, they had nothing to boast of, in comparison of him: 22. "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I." Did they claim superior regard on account of their Jewish descent? He had equal reason to do so. He was an *Hebrew* both on the father and mother's side, and had been instructed "according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers," by Gamaliel a renowned doctor of the law; consequently he belonged to that class of Jews who used the Hebrew scriptures in their public worship. Did they boast of their being the offspring, not of profane Esau, but of the beloved Jacob, to whom the promise and the blessing belonged? He also could trace up his descent from Benjamin, one of the most eminent tribes of Israel. Did they consider it a ground of preference, that they were the *seed of Abraham*, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God? this privilege was equally enjoyed by him, nay, he could claim the honour of being a son of Abraham in the highest sense of the term, as walking in the steps of the faith of that illustrious saint. We have a similar enumeration of the carnal privileges

of the Apostle, in Phil. iii. 4—6. " If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more ; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee ; concerning zeal, persecuting the church ; touching the righteousness which is by the law, blameless." Did they esteem themselves the *servants of Christ*, as being employed in the honourable work of preaching the Gospel ? Though it might have the appearance of vain-glory, he would venture to say, he was *above them* in all the qualifications and honours of a christian teacher : 23. " Are they ministers (*διακονοι*) of Christ ; I speak as a fool (*παράφρων*, participle,) I am more (*ὑπερ ὧν*, I am above them, *M^cKnight*.) In labours more abundant (*περισσεύουσας*), in stripes above measure, (*ὑπερβάλλοντας*) in prisons more frequent, in deaths often." The distinctions conferred on him, as a minister, were not perhaps of such a nature as they would be ambitious of sharing : they resembled the honours of the veteran soldier, whose body is covered with the scars of wounds received in fighting the battles of his country. *His* was a pre-eminence, not of wealth and ease, but of hardship and danger : He surpassed not only the factious teachers, but even the *apostles themselves*, in the variety and magnitude of his sufferings. Though constantly engaged in preaching the Gospel, he had been obliged, more frequently than any other of the apostles, to occupy the leisure moments afforded him, in *labouring with his hands*, (*κοπιῶν*), to supply his own wants, and those of his companions in the ministry. He had been often scourged, as a common felon, (*ὡς πληγῆς*) beyond what nature could well endure, for no other crime than that of preaching the word of life to his fellow-men. He had been repeatedly cast into public prisons (*ὡς φυλάκας*), among the vilest criminals, and loaded with fetters to prevent his escape. He was frequently in danger of his life ; and death, in the most appalling and various forms, stared him in the face, (*ὡς θανάτου*). He proceeds in his enumeration : 24. 25. " Of the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one : thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck ; a night and a day (*νυκθήμερον*) I have spent (*πεπνυμένος*) in the deep." He had five different times been subjected to the Jewish punishment of the *scourge*, which they were still allowed by their heathen rulers to inflict, receiving each time thirteen strokes with a whip of

three cords, or thirty nine stripes, (Deut. xxv. 3.) ; and no doubt he would recollect, with due humiliation, the number of innocent persons whom he had caused to be treated in the same manner in the days of his ignorance, (Acts xxvi. 11.) On three separate occasions he had been beaten with *rods*, (ῥαβδοσθῆναι) according to the Roman method of punishing offenders, when his privilege as a Roman citizen could not procure his exemption, (Acts xvi. 22.) Once, when preaching at Lystra, he had been cruelly *stoned*, (λίθισθῆναι) and left for dead, (chap. xiv. 19.) His speedy restoration, on that occasion, was evidently miraculous. In passing from one part of the Roman empire, to another, he had thrice suffered the calamity of *shipwreck*, (ναυαγῆσαι) ; a fourth danger of this kind afterwards befel him, of which we have so lively a description, Acts xxvii. On one of those trying occasions, (as it should seem) he had been a *whole day* in the deep sea, (ἡ τὴν ὅλην ἡμέραν), probably clinging to a part of the wreck, and no doubt nearly exhausted with cold, hunger, and fatigue :* 26, 27. "In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, (ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μοχθῶ, in labour and toil, *M^cKnight*), in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." In prosecuting his benevolent designs, he was obliged frequently to undertake long and fatiguing *journeys* (ὁδοπορίας), for the most part on foot. He was sometimes in danger of being drowned while crossing broad and rapid *rivers*, (κινδυνεύειν ποταμούς), where convenient bridges were not provided ; sometimes he was exposed to the depredations of *robbers* (λῃστῶν) who infested the high-ways ; repeatedly his life was sought by his unbelieving and bigotted *countrymen* (αἰρετικούς), who did not think it fit that he should live, (Acts xxii. 22.) Nor was he less obnoxious to the infuriated multitude among the *Gentiles*, (ἐξ ἑθνῶν), whose idolatrous practices he exposed (Acts xix. 29, 30.) In many of the principal *towns* (ἐν πόλεσι), tumults were raised on his account which threatened his destruction, as at Philippi, Iconium, Thessalonica, Jerusalem, and Ephesus. In passing through *desert*

* Dr Paley thinks he was obliged to take to an open boat upon the loss of the ship, (*Hor. Paul.* 2 Cor. No. 9.)

places, (*ἐν τοῖς τοῖς*) he was exposed to the attack of wild beasts, or in danger of losing his way, and perishing for want. By sea (*ἐν θαλάσσῃ*) he was assailed with tempests, or in danger of falling in with rocks and quicksands. Nor was he less tried by the malicious insinuations and factions proceedings of those, who, under the mask of the christian name, sought to corrupt the Gospel, and to counteract the effect of his labours, (*ἐν ψευδοδιδασκαλίᾳ*). In short, he was worn out with *fatigue*, and anxiety, and want of rest. Sleep often fled from his eyes (*ἐν ἀγρυπνίᾳ*), his bodily strength was exhausted, from the want of proper *nourishment* (*ἐν λιμῇ καὶ δίψῃ*), and, on some occasions of peculiar difficulty, by the observance of extraordinary seasons of humiliation and *fasting*, (*ἐν νηστείᾳ*). He was destitute frequently of the shelter of a house, and was exposed to the chilling damps of night; nor would his circumstances permit him to procure, at all times, decent clothing to defend him from the inclemency of the weather, and to enable him to appear in public in a manner becoming his office as a christian teacher, (*ἐν ψυχῇ καὶ γυμνασίῃ*). Dr Doddridge here observes, "How hard was it for a man of a genteel and liberal education, as St Paul was, to bear such rigours, and to wander about like a vagabond, hungry and almost naked; yet coming into the presence of persons in high life, and speaking in large and various assemblies, on matters of the utmost importance."

These distresses chiefly affected his *body*, and would have been comparatively light, had his *mind* been at ease. But there were other cares, of a more weighty nature, which continually pressed upon him: 28. "Besides those things that are without (those outward troubles, *τῶν παρῳκῶν*), that which cometh upon me daily, the care (*μέριμνα*) of all the churches." The word *ἐπινοήματα* is extremely emphatic; it properly signifies a tumult or insurrection, and represents the Apostle's mind as daily exposed to a thousand anxieties, crowding upon him, and ready to bear him down. The phrase is well rendered by Doddridge, "The care of all the churches rushing in upon me every day." M'Knight reads, "that which is my daily pressure;" so the *Vulg.* *instantia mea quotidiana*. The Apostle was constantly applied to by the churches for direction, advice, and consolation, and he felt the utmost anxiety for their purity, steadfastness, and peace. His care was not limited to the general concerns of the churches collectively, but extended to the circumstances of individual

members: 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended (scandalized or made to stumble, *σκανδαλίζω*), and I burn not (*υπερβωμαι*, am not fired)?" He was so careful not to wound the conscience of those that were *weak* in the faith, that he abridged himself of his liberty in many things indifferent. When any individuals *stumbled* through the power of temptation, or the disorderly conduct of others, he *burned* with zeal to see them restored to the fellowship of the church, and the cause of offence removed. Since he had been *compelled* to boast of his own exertions, he would not insist on his miraculous gifts, his natural talents, or his astonishing success; he would rather point out some of those *hardships* which he had been called to struggle with, and in which the power of Christ had been displayed in sustaining his feeble body: 30. "If I must (*δε*) glory, I will glory (or boast) of things which relate to my infirmities (or weakness, *ασθενειαι*)." In saying this, he particularly referred to a remarkable instance of divine interposition in his favour, on an occasion of very great danger; and with this he would close the catalogue of his sufferings. 31—33. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not: In Damascus, the governor (*εθναρχη*, ethnarch) under Aretas the king, guarded (*φρουρου*) the city of the Damascenes, wishing (*βουλομενος*) to apprehend me: And through a window, in a basket (*καλαμινθη*) I was let down (*εκαταβην*) by the wall, and escaped (*εξουδυνησα*) his hands." The event here mentioned is narrated, with some variety of expression, Acts ix. 23—25. "And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him; but their lying in wait was known of Saul; and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket." In introducing this memorable occurrence, the Apostle solemnly appeals for the truth of it to the ever blessed God, as it was in itself so surprising a deliverance, as almost to exceed belief. It had also happened many years before, and it was probably unknown to the Corinthians. Dr McKnight further observes, that this asseveration refers likewise to the truth of the *revelations* mentioned in the next chapter, of which there was no human witness. The Apostle, after his conversion, had begun to preach in the synagogues of Damascus, and his labours were attended with much success, (Acts ix. 20—22.) This greatly exasperated the Jews, who had sufficient influence to procure the assistance of the governor appointed by Aretas, king of Ara-

bia, who at that time exercised the sovereign authority in those parts, (*Joseph. Antiq.* book 13. c. 13. sect. 4.) This officer blockaded the city-gates with a band of soldiers, desirous to prevent the escape of Paul; but the disciples having obtained notice of this plot, conveyed him by night to a house on the wall, and let him down through a window in a basket. Thus, contrary to all expectation, he effected his escape. Rahab the harlot evinced the strength of her faith, in securing the deliverance of the spies by a similar contrivance, Josh. ii. 15.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from this passage of Scripture, the truth of the Gospel history. Some of the facts here mentioned are expressly corroborated by the sacred historian in the book of the Acts. Others are alluded to, 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. It is justly remarked by Dr Paley, that the variety of circumstances here enumerated, which are not specified in the Acts, proves that this Epistle was not framed from that narrative; while, at the same time, there is no *contradiction* between the two documents, (*Hor. Paul.* 2 Cor. No. 9.) The charges brought by the factious teachers against the Apostle, have been the occasion of furnishing us with a more full account of his life, and a nearer insight into his character, than we should otherwise have had. If he had not been *compelled* to speak out on the subject of his sufferings, his modesty might have concealed them. We would again ask, is it probable that a man of his talents and education would have submitted to such hardships in defence of a falsehood?

2. We learn the value of immortal souls. Did the Apostle endure such a load of sufferings in propagating the Gospel of Christ? How clearly does this intimate the lost and perishing condition of man, and that "there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved;" and how does the ardent zeal of this great Apostle condemn the selfish apathy of those who do nothing for the conversion of the world.

3. We see that the most eminent servants of God are often exercised with peculiar trials. What a noble example is here set before us of patience, self-denial, and submission to the will of Providence! How ill does it become *us* to complain of our comparatively light afflictions, and how thankful should we be for exemption from outward persecutions! "Blessed is the man

who endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord will give to them that love him." (James i. 12.)

4. What a remarkable instance is afforded us, in the history of this Apostle, of the power of divine grace ! How changed from what he once was, when breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord ! Such transformations the Gospel alone can effect.

" Lions and beasts of savage name
Put on the nature of the lamb ;
While the wide world esteem it strange,
Gaze, and admire, and hate the change."

It is still our duty to count all things loss for Christ. " He that will save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever will lose his life for His sake, shall find it," (Matt. xvi. 25.) The christian minister, especially the christian missionary, ought to study this passage of Scripture. Let them emulate the zeal and devotedness of this excellent man, who counted not his life dear, " that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

CHAPTER TWELFTH

SECTION FIRST.—Verses 1-12

THE APOSTLE'S VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

THE APOSTLE'S VISIONS AND REVELATIONS, though with great reluctance, he refuses almost not to dwell on in the case of Christ. It was not natural, generally speaking, to suppose that any one so bent of mind as Paul was, or of the disposition which had been conferred upon him, that the testimony of Paul's conversion would justify him in the account of all subsequent passages. Nothing but the necessity of the case could have induced him to dwell on this subject, not so the apostolic authority had been called in question, and even his personal information might in depreciation of his ministerial character. He would not expose himself to the charge of van-glory, by stating some other promise of the divine regard towards him. He now referred to certain preternatural discoveries made to him, of the glories of the heavenly world, a considerable time before the date of this letter. 1. "It is not expedient (or *expedient*) for me doubtless, (2d) to glory (or boast, *arguing*). But I will come (or *come*) to visions and revelations (or *visions*) of the Lord." It has been observed, that the illative particle *for*, is here used adversatively, in the sense of *nevertheless* or *notwithstanding*. Dr McKnight supposes that the expression, "visions of the Lord," signifies, his seeing the Lord Jesus personally, but it may imply nothing more than that the manifestations here recorded were graciously made to him by the condescension of the Saviour. It is evident, from the scope of the whole passage, that the Apostle speaks of himself; for it would have been quite irrelevant to his argument to have

appealed to the marks of divine favour bestowed on any other individual. This opinion is confirmed by a reference to the language of the 6th and 7th verses, where the disguise is dropped: "lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations," &c. He writes in the third person, out of modest delicacy, as not wishing to vaunt his superior privileges and qualifications—a practice to which the factious teachers were much addicted. Some have thought, that *two* distinct visions are here described; one enjoyed by the Apostle when caught up into the third heaven, and the other in paradise: and from this it is maintained, that these are two distinct places, the *former* being the immediate residence of God and the holy angels, and the *latter* of departed saints. This point the late Dr Campbell labours to establish in his *Preliminary Dissertations to the Gospels*, (Dissert. 6. part 2. sect. 21.) In support of his opinion, the learned critic refers to the general sentiment of the ancient fathers; he alleges that the Apostle speaks of visions and revelations in the plural number, and that, if only one rapture is described, there is an unnecessary repetition in the language. But there does not seem sufficient ground for this distinction. The event was of an extraordinary nature, and it was natural for the Apostle, in announcing it, to use a variety of expressions nearly similar, to add the greater weight and solemnity to the narrative. The repetition of a word or sentence is frequently used by way of *emphasis*. Neither does it follow that only one revelation could be made to him, on the supposition of his being only once caught up; for he might be favoured with many discoveries on the same occasion. Dr Campbell's object is to prove the existence of a middle state,—a doctrine which seems to be more allied to the ancient systems of pagan and rabbinical philosophy, than to the genius of the Gospel dispensation. The word paradise is employed by the LXX for the abode of our first parents in a state of innocence; and, by a natural figure, came to be used by our Lord and his apostles, for the invisible seat of the Divine presence. Our Saviour promised, that the dying malefactor should be with him in paradise; but we know that Christ has passed into the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father. It may, indeed, be said, that he did not ascend into heaven till after his resurrection; but this is not inconsistent with the supposition of his spirit being im-

mediately received into glory, waiting for the redemption of his body from the grave. In Revelations ii. 7. the word *παράδεισος* seems clearly to describe the heavenly world. This is admitted by Dr Campbell himself. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," compared with chap. xxii. 2. The Apostle had a desire to depart and to be with Christ; and he declares, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. This must refer to the *immediate* presence of Christ; for he already enjoyed spiritual communion with him; but He was then entered into his glory; and consequently the Apostle knew nothing of an intermediate state.

Paul had already been favoured with many visions of the Saviour: on the road to Damascus, (Acts ix. 3.); at Corinth, (chap. xviii. 9.); and in the city of Jerusalem, (chap. xxii. 18.) Another appearance of this kind is afterwards recorded, (chap. xxiii. 11.) But he was now about to relate a still more glorious revelation. 2—4. "I know (*οἶδα*) a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not (*οὐκ οἶδα*); or whether out of the body (*ἔκτος*) I know not: God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven (*ἠρπάχθη εἰς τὸν τρίτον οὐρανόν*): And I know such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth,) That he was caught up into paradise (*ἠρπάχθη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον*), and heard unspeakable words (*ἄβυσσος λόγων*) which it is not possible (*ἔστιν*) for a man to utter."^{*} The verb *οἶδα* (as observed by Dr Guise,) may be rendered in the present tense, "I know," and is so translated repeatedly in the 2d and 3d verses. The meaning is, "I know a man who was caught up." To give it a *past* signification, adds unnecessary obscurity to the text. In both verses, the word *scio* is used by the Vulgate. This extraordinary event had occurred many years before; but the extreme modesty of the Apostle had prevented him from communicating it to the world, till now that his character was unjustly aspersed. It had happened to a man in Christ, that is, to a christian man, a member of Christ's mystical body. On that occasion, the invisible glories of the heavenly state, had been openly displayed, by immediate intuition, to his ravished sight. Thus the mode of communication was different from that enjoy-

* This last clause is well rendered by the Rhemish translators, "which it is not granted to man to utter."

ed by the beloved Apostle in the isle of Patmos, when he beheld the holy city, in all its transcendent magnificence. In *that* case, the objects of vision were strongly impressed on the mind, but the inspired prophet remained on earth. In *this*, the spectator was caught up into heaven: But the Apostle could not say whether the spirit had, for a season, been separated from the body, or whether, the body being miraculously caught up by the power of God, the revelations had been made through the medium of the corporeal senses. We have instances of such raptures in the body, Ezek. iii. 12, 14. and Acts viii. 39. This last passage must be understood *literally*. It is here supposed, that the presence of the body is not *necessary* to the full exercise of the mental faculties; and there can be no doubt that the soul is capable of receiving impressions of material objects, when the bodily senses are suspended. The phenomena of dreaming illustrate this fact. Thus the vision might have been made to the Apostle "out of the body." In the same manner, it was easy for Him who translated Enoch and Elijah to heaven, to have transported this distinguished Apostle *in the body*, to the seat of blessedness. But in whatever way the revelation was made, it was well known to God; and the circumstance of the Apostle being unconscious as to the precise *mode* of communication, could make no difference as to the fact itself. This highly favoured man was *caught up*, as in a moment of time, *as far as the third heaven*. The Jews distinguished the heaven into three parts: first, the surrounding atmosphere; 2dly, the region of the stars; and 3dly, the invisible residence of the Divine Majesty. To this last, reference is made; he was transported, through the ærial and starry heavens, into that abode of purity, bliss, and love, of which the earthly paradise, the seat of innocence and peace, was only a splendid figure; there he heard "unutterable things;" he listened to the song of angels and redeemed souls; and the sweet melody of their golden harps seemed yet to thrill in his ears: but how could he attempt to give any adequate conception of the richness and sublimity of their strains? The language of mortals is too poor to furnish expressions: imagination drops her wing, and the faculties are locked up in silent admiration. It was impossible to communicate those celestial words, for they were *unspeakable*. It is also the design of heavenly wisdom, that the glories of the future state, should be the object of *faith* and not of *sense*; and therefore the

Apostle was not at liberty to disclose them: thus the words *οὐκ ἔστιν* may be rendered, as in our version, *unlawful*. If this be the case, it is vain for us to speculate on the subject. Some hints are given by the beloved Apostle, as to the nature of that new song which is sung to God and to the Lamb, (Rev. v. 9—14); but "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him." Our powers of conception are blunted and enfeebled in the present state, and we must cast aside the garments of mortality, before we can have a proper view of the heavenly world. In great kindness, a mode of instruction is adopted, more suited to our faculties, and corresponding to our present condition; and enough is communicated to animate our hope, and to elevate our affections. It is surprising that learned men should have attempted, after the caution given by the Apostle, even to conjecture what were the nature of those revelations which were made to him. The visions here alluded to, served many important purposes. The mind of the Apostle was thus animated, cheerfully to endure persecution and suffering for the sake of Christ. The certainty of a future state was demonstrated; and he was qualified to make known this delightful truth to the world. In reading the short and sublime description here given, with so much modesty, we cannot but notice the striking contrast which it forms, with the puerile and incoherent details which Mohammed gives of his sensual paradise, during his pretended rapture.

The Apostle would have some reason to *boast* of a person who had been honoured with such extraordinary marks of the divine condescension and favour; but he would not be more explicit, where he *himself* was so nearly concerned; and in speaking in his own person, he chose rather to dwell on the *hardships* he had undergone. 5. "Of such an one (*ὅς τις ταπεινός*) I will glory, but of myself I will not glory, except in my infirmities (*αὐθιγναις*)." Even his very *weaknesses* were the effect of distinguished goodness; for the trouble to which he afterwards refers, (ver. 7.) was connected with the previous honours bestowed upon him, like the wounds which the soldier has received in successfully fighting the battles of his country, and of which he has just reason to *boast*, as proving his intrepidity and valour. Thus Jacob's *lame-ness* continually reminded him of that memorable night, when he wrestled with the angel, and prevailed, (Gen. xxxii. 26.) He

might be inclined to dwell with some degree of complacency, on such proofs of his Master's love, without incurring the charge of vanity; for he would advance nothing but what was strictly *true*; but he would refrain from any farther allusion to these visions of the Lord, lest they should go to the opposite extreme, and, instead of their present low opinion, should look upon him as more than mortal, and ascribe those honours to *him*—a poor sinful creature, which exclusively belong to the exalted Saviour. 6. "For even should I wish (*θέλω*) to boast, I shall not be a fool (*αφρων*, unwise); for I will speak the truth; but I forbear, (*φιδόμεαι*, I spare) lest any one should think (*λογισθῇ*) of me above what he seeth me (to be), or what he heareth of (or from, *ἐξ*) me." The Apostle did not wish to be valued *above* his actual condition and attainments, to the encouragement of superstitious veneration, and to the disparagement of other faithful ministers. Dr McKnight supposes that the language of this verse is ironical, as if Paul did not wish to interfere with the mean opinion, which the factious teachers entertained of his qualifications; but there seems no occasion for resorting to this solution. Neither the Apostle nor his brethren in the ministry, would allow those honours to be paid to them, which an ambitious priesthood has since arrogated to itself, in the character of their successors, and which is paid to their *names* in the antichristian church, contrary to their own intentions and desire.

The honour conferred on Paul, on the occasion before alluded to, was so remarkable, that even *he* was in danger of being elated with spiritual pride, as if these revelations had been the reward of his superior zeal and ability; and therefore, in great mercy, the Lord was pleased to visit him with a very painful affliction, that he might be taught that, after all, he was a feeble and sinful mortal. 7. "And lest I should be exalted above measure (*ὑπεραίρωμαι*) by the abundance (or rather, as rendered by Dr McKnight, the transcendency, *ὑπερβολή*) of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh (*σκόλοψ ἐν σαρκί*), a messenger of Satan to buffet me (*ἵνα μὴ κολαφίζῃ*), lest I should be exalted above measure." This last clause is wanting in the Vulgate, and in some MSS. It has probably been omitted by some transcriber as superfluous. The temptation here referred to, is compared to a sharp and pointed *thorn* rankling *in the flesh*, and producing continual pain and irritation. Thus the idolatrous Canaanites were as "pricks

in the eyes, and thence in the sides" of the ancient Israelites, by striking them with burning rods. NUM. xxviii. 35.) It is further called a messenger of Satan in allusion, perhaps, to the history of Job. chap. i. 7. where Satan is represented as smiting him with sore boils. *see Luke xiii. 16.* The enemy of souls avails himself at the time when we are appointed to the christian, to tempt him with strong temptations in order to shake his faith in the wisdom and goodness of God. Thus he is taught his own weakness and dependence. Dr Doddridge renders the last clause "that the messenger of Satan might tempt me," understanding by this the false teacher who took occasion from the Apostle's infirmity to upbraid him; but the connecting particle *as would* in this case, have been put before *appears Satan*. This sentiment, however, is no doubt included. Various conjectures have been formed as to the nature of this temptation. Some suppose it was some affection of the nerves, occasioned by his captivity *may* however: but then there would have been less reason to desire that he had been caught up bodily. Others think it was some mortal passion. This was the general opinion of the ancient fathers: but he could scarcely say that he took pleasure in any fleshly lust. Neither could it be a natural infirmity, for it is spoken of as inflicted subsequently to the revelations. It is possible he may refer to some bitter persecution, or to the reproaches of some violent adversary: though, from the manner in which it is described, as a thorn in the flesh, it is more likely that he refers to some bodily trouble. Whatever it was, it was very distressing to his mind, and apt to hinder his usefulness as a preacher: To this he appears to allude Gal. iv. 14. "My temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected."

Under the pressure of this affliction, he prayed to the Lord Jesus with great earnestness, that it might be removed from him: & "For (or on account of, *hence*) this thing, I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart (*aworth*) from me." Our Saviour had entreated his Father three times, that the cup of suffering might pass from him, (Matt. xxvi. 44.) and the Apostle, after his example, repeatedly prayed for deliverance: his prayer, indeed, was not immediately answered, nor was his request *directly* granted; but a general promise was made to him, that divine assistance would be communicated, in proportion to his wants; and

thus he would be enabled to bear whatever infinite wisdom might see fit to lay upon him: 9. "And he said to me, my grace is sufficient (αρκει) for thee, for my strength (δυναμις) is made perfect (τελειουται) in weakness; most gladly (ηδιστα) therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may overshadow (σπισκηνωση, may tabernacle upon) me." In these words allusion seems to be made to what is said, Isaiah xl. 29. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." So, in the blessing of Asher, it is promised "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be," (Deut. xxxiii. 25.) Thus, the very weakness of the christian gives occasion for a more glorious display of divine power in sustaining him, just as the child clings more closely to its parent while danger is apprehended. This answer was quite satisfactory; Paul was taught to rely, not on his own energy, but on the sufficiency of divine grace; he saw that his weakness, so far from *endangering* his safety, allowed more ample scope for the communication of spiritual strength; consequently, the more the creature was out of view, the more was the glory of the Creator exalted; so far, therefore, from murmuring at the dispensations of Providence, or wishing to be exempt from outward troubles, he would rather *rejoice* in those weaknesses, which enhanced the honour, and perfected the display, of the *Saviour's power*. The connection of these two verses proves that the Apostle directed his prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was *His power* that rested upon him; it was *his grace* that was made sufficient for him: otherwise the promise made, would not warrant the conclusion. And it cannot be pretended that this was an extraordinary occasion, when our Lord personally appeared to him; he speaks of it as his usual practice. But God alone is the proper object of prayer—he only is every where present to hear our petitions: the very circumstance, therefore, of Christ being addressed in prayer, establishes the fact of his deity. Besides, he is here represented as the Author of *grace*, the source of strength and consolation to his people, which must imply almighty power. The passage is parallel to Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." This verse is thus paraphrased by M'Knight, "Sufficient for qualifying thee to be an Apostle is my grace, the miraculous gifts with which I have endowed thee. Besides, my power in the conversion of the world, is dis-

played in the weakness of the instruments whereby that work is accomplished." But although this idea may be included, we have reason to think that this promise is of far more general and permanent application; that it refers not merely to the Apostle, but to all believers; that it respects not merely *ministerial qualifications*, but the supply of grace and strength in the soul, for the performance of every duty, and the endurance of every trial: And it contains a very clear proof of the doctrine of effectual grace, as being something of a different nature from that general energy which upholds all creatures in the exercise of their faculties. The word *σκινα* properly signifies "to cover as with a tent," and the idea is finely illustrated in the 27th psalm 5th ver. "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock." It has been well observed, that we are instructed by this incident, that we ought not to be discouraged because our prayers are not immediately answered, or conclude that they have not been heard, because they are not answered agreeably to our expectations. Even though affliction be not removed, a more valuable and important end may be accomplished; and we have the promise of divine grace to enable us to bear it. On the whole, therefore, the Apostle considered the various troubles he met with, as blessings in disguise, inasmuch as they led him to place a more simple dependance on the Saviour, and afforded occasion for promoting his faith and patience, of withdrawing his heart from the world, and of weakening the power of temptation: 10. "Wherefore, I take pleasure in (*ωδυνω*, I am well pleased with—*M. Knight*) infirmities, in reproaches, (or insults, *βλαφημια*), in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, (or straits, *συνωχρησεις*) for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." He here sums up the different trials which he had before more fully enumerated—his bodily *weaknesses*—the *reproaches* and taunts of the proud philosopher—the inconveniences of *poverty*—the violent *opposition* of the multitude and their rulers, and the dangerous *journeys* and exhausting *labours* he was obliged to undergo in the prosecution of his ministry. In these he rejoiced, not on their own account, for he had the same feelings with other men, but from love to the Lord Jesus, and for the sake of promoting the interests of his kingdom; for, however paradoxical it might appear, he felt himself most secure when he

was most sensible of his own weakness : when faith was in lively exercise, he was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might ; every difficulty seemed to disappear, and the consideration of his own infirmities was swallowed up in the realizing view of the glorious perfections of his Almighty Lord. Thus Peter, so long as he looked simply to the Saviour, was enabled to walk on the water, but when he thought only of the boisterous wind and frowning billows, his resolution gave way, and he exclaimed, " Save, Lord, for I perish."

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from this subject the distinct consciousness of the soul, even when in a state of separation from the body. Our faith is confirmed in the doctrine of a future world, and our thoughts are directed to the happiness enjoyed by departed saints. How glorious is that place where the spirits of the just reside, and the presence of the Saviour is displayed ! In the celestial paradise, they sing that song which no man can learn, but those who are redeemed from the earth : They drink of the pure river of water which issues from the throne of God, and eat of the tree of life which affords its precious fruits as the pledge of immortality. May it be our happy privilege to be caught up to meet our Lord, when he appears in his glory : Then we shall be with him, not for a short season, but for ever !

2. We have already seen the encouragement which this subject affords to the exercise of *prayer*. Whatever may be the nature of our troubles, we may apply with confidence to our heavenly Saviour, who was in all points tried as we are, yet without sin, and who is both able and willing to help us. If he sees meet, he can remove the temptation. If not, he will give us grace to bear it. Then we shall glory in tribulation also, and rejoice if we are counted worthy to suffer for his sake. Those who are favoured with extraordinary manifestations of the love of God, are sometimes immediately plunged into some deep distress, and left to feel their own weakness and depravity. Let us not then be elated with the privileges we enjoy, or with the gifts which we possess. Pride and self-confidence are not made for man. Humility is our greatest ornament, and a thorough conviction of our own nothingness is our strongest security. " For even

the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength—they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint," (Isa. xl. 30, 31.

" When rising floods my soul o'erflow,
When sinks my heart in waves of woe ;
Jesus, thy timely aid impart,
And raise my head, and cheer my heart.

Saviour, where'er thy steps I see,
Dauntless, untired, I follow thee :
O let thy hand support me still,
And lead me to thy holy hill.

If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength proportion to my day ;
Till toil, and grief, and pain, shall cease,
Where all is calm, and joy, and peace."

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 11—21.

PAUL AGAIN EXPRESSES HIS INTENTION OF VISITING CORINTH.

THE Apostle had been induced, in his own vindication, to recount various particulars of his life, especially his abundant labours and sufferings in preaching the Gospel, and the extraordinary marks of divine regard with which he had been favoured.—In *this* he might appear to have acted *foolishly*, as transgressing the rules of strict decorum. Was this the light in which the Corinthians viewed his conduct? They had themselves to blame; for had they cherished a proper esteem for him, such a proceeding would have been rendered *unnecessary*: 11. " I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me, (*αναγκασται*): for I ought to have been commended by you; for I am nothing behind (*οὐδὲν ὑποσχημα*) the very greatest apostles, though I be nothing." The



first clause is rendered interrogatively by *M'Knight*, "Have I become a fool by boasting?" It was indeed very unpleasant for the Apostle to dwell so long on the subject of his own exertions; but the neglect and ingratitude of the Corinthian church had forced him to do it. They ought to have spared him this ungracious task; they had every opportunity of knowing his character and qualifications; and it was *their* duty to have stood forward in his vindication. Instead of this, they seemed more disposed to listen to the unfounded calumnies of his enemies. They were well aware that he had afforded them every proof of a divine commission, which the most distinguished apostle could have presented,—in the miracles which he wrought,—in the spiritual gifts which he imparted,—in the success of his preaching, and in the purity and disinterestedness of his conduct. He did not mean, by this, to arrogate any praise to himself; for he was conscious of his own weakness and entire dependance on divine grace: he had nothing, either as a christian or as an apostle, but what he had received. Apart from the honour of his divine Master, his own reputation was of little consequence. In *himself*, he was ready to admit he was a poor worthless creature. In the presence of the divine Majesty, he was *nothing*, yea, less than nothing and vanity.

Yet, as an ambassador of Christ, he would magnify his office, and not suffer his character to be unjustly aspersed, or his authority wantonly rejected. Whatever *others* might think of him, though some might even be ignorant of his labours in the Gospel, the Corinthians, *at least*, ought to know better than to listen to the insinuations and reproaches of his adversaries. During his ministry among them, his testimony had been confirmed by the most illustrious evidences. 12. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought (*κτενεύματα*) among you in all patience, in (or by, *ὑπὸ*) signs, and wonders, (*σημεῖα*) and powers, (*δυνάμεις*, *virtutibus*, *Vulg.*)" The various miracles which he had wrought, proved the exertion of a supernatural power, and were unequivocal signs of his being called to the apostleship. The two former expressions are thought to refer to the working of miracles; the third to the bestowment of spiritual gifts: And it has been justly observed, that the confident appeal which Paul here makes, in the face of an opposing faction, to the miracles he had wrought among them, is a strong

attestation to the reality of those miracles. These extraordinary powers had been exercised, not for his own *advantage*, or for their *destruction*, but in the most benevolent and unassuming manner; in the midst of much opposition, under many trials and discouragements, and while he laboured with his own hands for his support. This last circumstance was indeed the only point in which he had not followed the example of other apostles and ministers: they were, in general, maintained by the churches which enjoyed the benefit of their labours; and they had a right to this reasonable acknowledgement. 13. "For what is it wherein ye were inferior (*ἥττωτε*, *quod minus habuistis*,—*Vulgate*) to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome (*καταρραγών, γρῶναι*) to you? Forgive me this wrong." He had thought proper, for certain weighty reasons, to waive his right, as a christian teacher, to maintenance from them; and in so far, they might consider themselves as *falling short* of other churches, in the esteem of the Apostle. But was he to be blamed on that account? had he done them *an injury* (*ἄδικια*), or was it not intended as a benefit? Indeed, so far as it implied a distrust of their affection and sincerity, it might have the *appearance* of an injury, and in *this* view, he would beg their forgiveness. This may be spoken ironically, as he in fact had done them a service,—or seriously, inasmuch as the primitive christians considered it a privilege to provide for their teachers, and were grieved when their liberality was refused.

In the present distracted and disorderly state of the Corinthian church, he had a good reason for declining to receive any thing from them; as, had he acted otherwise, it might have been converted by his enemies, to a bad purpose, and might have been imputed to a worldly and covetous spirit. He, therefore, was still determined to act on the same principle, in the view of repeating his visit to Corinth. 14. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not *yours* but *you*; for the children ought not to lay up (*θησαυρίζω*) for the parents, but the parents for the children." It does not appear that the Apostle had been at Corinth more than *once*, at the date of this letter; but the meaning is, this was the third time he had been *prepared* to visit them, (1 Cor. xvi. 5. 2d Epis. i. 23.) The *first* time, he had been obliged to leave Ephesus abruptly, in consequence of which his plans were deranged;

and on the *second* occasion, he was anxious to spare the Corinthians, and therefore postponed his coming. In refusing temporal support, he was desirous to shew them, that his object was the salvation of their *souls*, not the possession of their *property*; and he acted on the principle of a kind and provident parent, who, far from being burdensome to his children, not only supplies their immediate wants by his own industry, but provides what he thinks will be necessary for their comfortable settlement in the world, when he is removed by death. The paternal relationship was a favourite allusion with the Apostle, (1 Theas. ii. 11.) So great was his affection for them, notwithstanding all that had passed, and so far was he from entertaining any resentment on account of their unkind suspicions, that he would cheerfully devote his *time* and *strength* in promoting their spiritual welfare. 15. "And I will most gladly (*ἰδιωτα*) spend and be spent for the sake of your souls (*ὥστε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν*); though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." In the same manner, in writing to the Thessalonians, (1 Epis. ii. 8.) he says, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." Nor was this determination suspended on their making a suitable return for his love; on the contrary, he would study to pay them the more marked attention, the less they seemed to prize his services; nor would *their* ingratitude provoke him to desert *his* post, or to neglect his duty: thus he would exemplify that divine precept, which he elsewhere recommends to his fellow christians, (Rom. xii. 21.) "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." We cannot conceive of a more generous and noble spirit than this. Such is the perversity of human nature, that we often meet with the greatest unkindness from those who have been most benefited by us; hence we are apt to conceive disgust, and to become weary in well-doing. It argues a greatness of soul above the attainment of mere nature, to persevere in benevolent attentions, *in spite of* ungrateful returns. This is the furthest possible remove from selfishness, and proves the worth and efficacy of divine grace. It shews a determination to do our duty at all hazards, looking for no reward from man, but aiming singly at the glory of God. Such was the character of the blessed Jesus: He was willing to spend and be spent, even for his enemies.

The following verse has been interpreted, as if the Apostle were describing his own policy. 16. "But be it so, I did not burden you (*κατιβαρυσεν*); yet being crafty (*πανουργος*), I caught you (*ιλαβεν*) with guile." It cannot, however, be supposed, that he would approve of doing evil that good might come; and therefore the expression is to be considered as another argument of his enemies: They might say, "True indeed, you did not make any *direct* application to the church for support, but you maintained yourself at our expense, by means of those whom you employed as your assistants." Thus the words "they say," are supplied by M'Knight after "nevertheless." In the same manner, the French version renders the passage, "On dira peut-être, que si je ne vous ai point été à charge, c'est qu'étant un homme artificieux, J'ai voulu agir de finesse pour vous surprendre:" i. e. "It will be said, perhaps, that if I was not chargeable to you, it was, that, being an artful man, I wished to practise deceit, in order to overreach you." To this insinuation he replies, in an animated style, by demanding who it was that had been employed for this purpose? 17. "Did I make a gain of you (*επλωριστησα*) by any of those whom I sent unto you?" After the Apostle had left Corinth, he had requested Titus and another brother to supply his place. They would not surely venture to say, that either of these his fellow-labourers had extorted money from them under false pretences, for they had acted on the very same principle with him, and had carefully followed his example. 18. "I besought (*παρακαλουν*) Titus, and with (him) I sent a brother: Did Titus make any (*τι*) gain of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?" The following verse is variously understood. 19. "Again, think ye that we apologise (*απολογουμεθα*) to you? in the sight of God (*κατω οπου του Θεου*) we speak in (or by, *υ*) Christ: but all things, beloved, (are done) for your edification." According to M'Knight, the word *πάλιν* is elliptical; and accordingly he supplies the expression, "by sending Titus again, think ye that we apologize?" Did they infer from this measure, that he was devising an excuse for not coming himself? But this supposes an unusual abruptness in the language: the meaning may merely be:—did they imagine that *any part* of his conduct towards them demanded an *apology*? No; For in all that he had *said*, he was conscious he had strictly adhered to truth, as became a servant of Christ, and as in the



presence of the omniscient God; and in all that he had *done*, whether in delaying his own visit—in sending Titus—in administering reproof—or in declining to receive any pecuniary aid from them, he had sought their *advancement* and establishment in the faith.

Yet, he was still apprehensive, lest, after all the exhortations he had addressed to them, and all the fair professions they had made, they had not been so faithful as they might have been, in correcting the divisions and disorders that prevailed amongst them. 19, 20. "For I fear, lest perhaps (*μή πως*) when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found by you such as ye would not: lest, perhaps, (there be) strifes, emulations, wraths, contentions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: Lest, when I come again, my God should humble me among you, and I shall bewail (*πνθισθῶ*) many who have sinned before (*προημαρτηκότες*), and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed." He was afraid that party-spirit had not altogether subided, and that a meeting, under existing circumstances, would not be pleasant to either party. Their inconsistency would hurt *his* mind, and his faithfulness might offend *them*. He would not be surprised to find the remains of the old leaven which had already produced such unhappy consequences—he means the disputes about favourite teachers: from thence arose contentions (*ἔρις*), jealousies (*ζῆλος*), warm resentments (*θυμὸς*), open ruptures (*ῥιπίσματα*), detractions (*καταλαλῆσαι*), secret insinuations (*ψιθυρίσματα*), overweening pride (*φυσιοποιεῖν*), and undisguised commotions (*ἀκαταστάσεις*). How unseemly and indecent were such exhibitions in a christian church! how entirely at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, and with the whole design of their mutual fellowship! He was also apprehensive, that though the incestuous person had been brought to repentance, there was still a disposition among *many* to palliate, and even to introduce into the church, the *impurities* which were practised in the heathen world, and which they professed to have renounced, when they embraced the Gospel; viz. *uncleanness* (*ακαθαρσία*), including all kinds and degrees of sensuality; *fornication* (*πορνεία*), or illicit intercourse with married or unmarried persons of the opposite sex; *lasciviousness* (*αυτὸλγία*), or the indulgence of wanton looks, gestures or language, which might have a tendency to provoke irregular desires. The Apostle, no

doubt, here glances at the improper conduct of those who persisted in frequenting idolatrous festivals, where these enormities were generally practised. It is also observable, that in the Asiatic churches, there were individuals who taught the disciples "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols," (Rev. ii. 14, 20.) Thus the God whom he loved and served, would take occasion, from the obstinacy of these offenders, to humble and reprove him, for his undue partiality towards the Corinthian church, by giving him, in their case, an affecting proof of the depravity of human nature; and he would be called to the unwelcome task of excluding, with deep sorrow, from the communion of saints, many who had already transgressed the laws of Christ, and had not repented of their evil deeds. As formerly noticed, on chap. 5th of the 1st Epistle, the excommunication of offenders in the primitive churches, was conducted with much solemnity, and was accompanied with great lamentations, especially on the part of their faithful pastors; hence the Apostle speaks of *bemoaning them*. The verb *metanoieo*, is generally rendered in the Vulgate, *agere penitentiam*, which is constantly translated in the Rhemish version, *to do penance*, as in this passage; and the translators inform us, that this word, "according to the use of the Scriptures and the holy fathers, does not only signify repentance and amendment of life, but also punishing past sins, by fasting, and such like penitential exercises." Such a representation as this is calculated to mislead the unwary: the word *metanoieo* signifies literally, a *change of mind*, which, of course, will lead to a change of conduct. Little stress is laid by the sacred writers on the outward signs of grief; they direct our chief attention to the proper regulation of the heart and life. "Rend your hearts, and not your garments," is the direction of the inspired penman, (Joel ii. 13.) The acceptable fast, is not to bow down the head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under us; it is to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to deal our bread to the hungry, and to bring the poor outcast to our house. (See Isa. lviii. 5—7.) "Bodily exercise," we are told, "profiteth little;" and the obvious tendency of enjoining flagellations, pilgrimages, and other such acts of will-worship, is to foster a self-righteous spirit, in opposition to the free grace of the Gospel: And we should like to know what is meant by *punishing past sins*? If by this we are to understand, making

atonement or satisfaction for them, this at once leads away the penitent from that great sacrifice which was offered once for all upon the cross, to a reliance on his own performances, which can never take away sin.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We have already had occasion to observe, that there is no foundation for the supposed supremacy of Peter over the other apostles. Paul asserts, that he was in nothing inferior to the very chief of the apostles. How seldom do we meet with christian teachers, who can say, with this indefatigable labourer, "we seek not yours, but you." Alas! there are many more to whom the complaint of God by his ancient prophet is applicable, "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock," (Ezek. xxxiv. 3.) The labourer is worthy of his reward; but there are few christian churches which would consider it as an *injury* to be relieved from the duty of maintaining their pastors.

2. How important is the faithful exercise of discipline in the church of Christ! Strifes, emulations, backbitings, and whisperings, are no less inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, than impurity and lasciviousness. It becomes us to rejoice with trembling, in witnessing the enlargement of the church by new converts. Many assume the profession of Christianity, who are not truly convinced of sin; in the time of temptation they fall away, or return to their former courses; and their faithful pastors are called to *mourn* over their defection from the way of truth, and to bewail the injury done to the cause of Christ. And the consideration of their lamentable state, is well fitted to excite feelings of the most painful nature; "for it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment." "These are spots in our feasts of charity, clouds without water, trees without fruit, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," (Jude 12, 13.)

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

SECTION FIRST.—VERSES 1—10.

IMPENITENT OFFENDERS THREATENED.

In the beginning of this chapter, the Apostle again adverts to the subject of his intended visit. 1. "This third time (*ἑκτὴν ἔτι*) I am coming to you: In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word (or thing, *ἑκάστη*) shall be established:" I have already observed, that when Paul speaks of his coming to Corinth *the third* time, he refers rather to the *purpose* which he had formed, than to three separate visits. Yet, it is possible, he may have been twice at Corinth before, though this is not mentioned in the history of the Acts. Dr M'Knight supposes, that, during the Apostle's residence there, during eighteen months from the period of his first arrival, he may have visited some of the neighbouring cities, and returned to Corinth, which he might call his *second* visit. He had delayed his coming as long as possible, in order to afford opportunity to the disorderly members, to repent and return to their duty, and had, in the meantime, contented himself with warnings and exhortations. He was now determined, however, in the view of being *personally present* with them, to proceed, in a formal manner, to execute the laws of Christ against offenders. In doing this, he would follow the rule laid down by our Saviour for disposing of offences in the church. Every thing should be regularly proved by the testimony of two or three competent witnesses, (Matt. xviii. 15—17.) It is observable, that the Apostle's words are almost literally the same with those in the last cited passage. By adhering to this law, no person would have reason to complain that justice had been denied him, or that he had been condemned on vague and contra-

dictory rumours. This most salutary rule had also been established by the law of Moses, (Deut. xvii. 2—7.; xix. 15.), and indeed is recognized in the judicial proceedings of all well regulated courts. We have here a plain instance of its being acted upon in the primitive churches in all cases of discipline; and there can be no doubt that it was meant to be a standing law in the kingdom of Christ. In proportion as the Saviour's rule is practically observed, do christian societies follow the will of God, and maintain their own purity and peace. It combines at once mildness with firmness, and acts as an admirable touch-stone of character. It has been thought by some, that by the two or three witnesses, the Apostle here refers to the repeated admonitions which he had given them, in this and the former epistle, in which he had been joined by his two brethren, Sosthenes and Timothy, whose united testimony sufficiently corroborated the evidence. If these admonitions were still disregarded, he would be warranted to proceed, without further proof, in excluding the impenitent. But it is more probable, that he intended to take evidence *on the spot*.

He had already warned them in both his letters, (1 Epis. iv. 21.; 2 Epis. i. 23.), that if he should be permitted to visit them a second time, he would inflict merited punishment on the offenders, whoever they might be; and he now repeated his admonition, both to those who had gone astray *previously* to the date of the first epistle, and to *all other* disorderly persons, as if he were personally with them, that they might not pretend ignorance: 2. "I told you before (*πρὸ τούτου*), and foretell, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent, now I write to those who have sinned before (*προημαρτημένοι*), and to all the rest, (*τοῖς λοιποῖς πάνσι*), that if I come again, I will not spare, (*οὐ φεισάμαι*)."
It has been well observed, that he seems here to threaten miraculous judgments, and that the confident manner in which he speaks on this subject, is a strong proof of his sincerity, as well as of the reality of those supernatural powers by which his apostolic authority was confirmed. In thus inflicting censure, he would afford them a clear testimony, that he spoke by the authority of Christ, and acted as his ambassador; but it would be an evidence of such a nature as they might not desire, and such as he would not wish to resort to, without the most urgent necessity, for it might be attended with very pain-

ful consequences: 3. "Since ye seek a proof (*δεικνυσθε*) of Christ speaking in (or by, *ἐν*) me, who (*ἐγώ*) is not weak towards you, but is mighty in (or among) you." This verse seems incomplete; but ought to be connected with the preceding, as part of the same sentence. In the Vulgate, it is rendered interrogatively; "an experimentum quæritis," &c.—"do ye require a proof?" They tauntingly demanded of him some unequivocal evidence of his apostolic commission, and affected to doubt whether he had been actually called to that office, just as the Jews captiously required of our Saviour a *sign* from heaven, (John vi. 30.) Such a demand on their part was very unreasonable; they might have been convinced by *this* time, that he spoke by the Spirit of Christ, who might thus be said to speak *in him*. The divine power of the Saviour had been displayed *towards them* (*υμῖν*), in the efficacy that attended the preaching of the Apostle, (1 Epis. ii. 4.); in the miracles wrought *among them* (*ἐν ὑμῖν*) by his instrumentality, as already observed, (chap. xii. 12.); in the fact of their own conversion; in the spiritual gifts imparted to them; and in the judgments already inflicted on disorderly members, (1 Epis. xi. 30.) In these various ways, the presence and *power of Christ* had been experienced by them, affording a glorious proof of his exaltation as Head of the church.

It is true, the Redeemer, in the days of his flesh, had been put to death in a painful and ignominious manner, as a *weak* and defenceless person. 4. "For though he was crucified through (*διὰ*) weakness, yet he liveth by (*ἐν*) the power of God; for (even so) we also are weak in (or with, *ἐν*) him; but we shall live with him by the power of God towards you." During the scene of our Saviour's sufferings, he had exhibited no proof of his mighty power; but had voluntarily submitted to the accursed death of the cross, for the salvation of the guilty. To those who beheld him in these circumstances of degradation, there was nothing presented to distinguish him from any of the sons of men; but he was soon restored to life by the glorious power of the Father, exerted in union with his own divine energy, (John ii. 19.); and now he reigns in endless blessedness, and displays his universal sovereignty, in conferring gifts for the increase and edification of his church. In like manner (*καὶ ὑμεῖς καὶ*), his apostles now appeared to the world, mean and obscure individuals, and were thus conformed to his character, and made to drink of his cup:

In the present case, too, their miraculous powers seemed, even to the church, to lie dormant (or dead), so far as these regarded the infliction of temporal judgments; but the impenitent offenders would find, that Paul had not been deprived of those powers, for they would be seen to revive, in an affecting and awful manner, should it be necessary to proceed to extremities against them: thus they would be convinced, when too late, that the divine power wrought effectually in *him* who was so greatly despised. This seems to be the meaning of the expression, "we shall live with Christ, by the power of God towards you." He may also intimate his sure hope, notwithstanding present appearances, of reigning in eternal life with his risen Lord.

The Corinthians seemed disposed to call his authority in question, and to require additional evidence of the power of Christ being in him; but it would be more for their advantage to institute an enquiry into *their own* state and character, as professing christians. 5. "Examine (εραζετε) yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove (δοκιμαζειτε) yourselves; know ye not yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you (εν υμιν), unless ye be without proof (αδοκιμασι)?" If, upon making trial, they had reason to conclude that they were in the faith, that is, were true believers, this would be the best evidence of his divine commission; "for the seal of his apostleship they were in the Lord." On the other hand, if they doubted his character and qualifications as an apostle, what assurance could they have that they had embraced the true doctrine of Christ, or were partakers of genuine faith? The language of this verse is figurative, and alludes to the practice of *trying* metals by fire, or by some other test, in order to *prove* their genuineness. This direction supposes that the knowledge of our being in the faith is attainable, otherwise it would be to no purpose to exhort christians to ascertain this point: *2dly*, It implies that we are apt to form false conclusions respecting our spiritual state. This is intimated in innumerable passages of Scripture, particularly in the parable of the virgins, and in that of the wedding garment. It was the case with the members of the church in Laodicea, who thought themselves rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing; while they were poor and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, (Rev. iii. 17.) *3dly*, It implies, that there are certain rules laid down, whereby assurance of our christianity may be obtained. The whole word of God is profitable

to direct us in this enquiry; and some portions of it seem to have been written expressly for this purpose, (e. g. our Lord's sermon on the mount, the epistle of James, and the first epistle of John.) The Apostle's language further intimates, that it is very scandalous in professing christians to remain ignorant of their true character; and that, on a subject of this nature, it is of the greatest importance to bring the investigation to a successful issue. The question he puts is very cutting, "Do ye not know yourselves?" as if he had said, "how can you pretend to judge of the character of *others*, if you do not know *your own*?" Such great pretenders to wisdom might surely be able to comply with that famous precept of human philosophy, *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, (*Juv. sat. 11. l. 27.*) "know thyself." This is the foundation of all right action. The evidence of faith here mentioned, is "Christ being in them:" that is, as Doddridge observes, "dwelling in them by the sanctifying and transforming influences of his Spirit." Dr M'Knight paraphrases the expression, "Jesus Christ is *among you* as a church;" and he adds in a note, that, as the Apostle is addressing the factious party, it cannot be supposed that Christ could be spiritually *in them*. But this learned critic does not reflect, that those who are described as having Christ in them, are expressly distinguished, by this mark, from those that *are without proof*; consequently he lays down the genuine test of christian principle. The exhortation is addressed to the whole church; but each individual must determine, by this rule, for himself. Christ's being *among them* as a church, in the administration of divine ordinances, would not prove that he lived in them *individually*, (as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, Gal. ii. 20.) But Jesus Christ dwells spiritually in the hearts of his people *by faith*, (Ephes. iii. 17.); he is formed in them, (Gal. iv. 19.); he is in them the hope of glory, (Col. i. 27.) This is the case, when he is supremely loved, when his image is impressed on the soul, when his commands are cheerfully obeyed, and when his grace and spirit are communicated in answer to believing prayer. Then the christian lives, "because Christ liveth in him, and the life which he lives in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him."* Without *this*, the most accurate knowledge,

* See an excellent Discourse on this text, in the conclusion of Mr Robinson's valuable work on Scripture characters.

and the most splendid gifts, will profit us nothing : we are *without proof* of our being in a state of salvation : we must be viewed as base counterfeits, who shall certainly be *rejected* in the day of *trial*. So the word ἀδοκίμοι seems to signify. Thus the LXX use the compound verb ἀποδοκιμαζω, in translating Jer. vi. 30. Ἀργυριοι ἀποδοκιμασμένοι καλῶσι αὐτοὺς, ὅτι ἀποδοκιμαστέ αὐτοὺς Κύριος, which is rendered in our version, “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.” The word *reprobate* is generally understood to signify those who are excluded from salvation by the divine decrees ; but it may justly be doubted, if ἀδοκίμοι be ever used in *this* sense in the New Testament. It is always employed with reference to a previous *trial*, and respects men as moral agents. Believers are no doubt said to be predestinated, according to the good pleasure of God’s will, to be holy, and without blame before him in love ; but it is not necessary to suppose, that the wicked perish in consequence of any decree of reprobation ; they are always represented as “ eating the fruit of their own ways.” The exercise of divine sovereignty seems to consist in the unconditional bestowment of eternal life. Nothing more is required to the condemnation of the ungodly, than to judge them according to the deeds done in the body.

The Apostle *hoped* that the examination here recommended would turn out favourably *for themselves* ; and then they would have the best proof that *he*, by whose ministry they had been converted, was no deceiver, but an approved servant of Christ : 6. “ But I trust (ἐλπίζω) that ye shall know that we are not without proof, (ἀδοκίμοι).” This may also bear on the case of the disorderly members ; *they* would know that he had not lost those miraculous powers by which his ministry was confirmed ; yet, if this be understood as alluding to *punishment*, he could hardly be said to *hope* for such a proof : rather, he wished that all of them might have an experimental knowledge of the truth and efficacy of his doctrine. It was the subject of his earnest prayer to the Father of mercies, that they might be kept from doing that which would be injurious to their own souls, and dishonourable to the christian profession ; not that he might be called to the exercise of miraculous powers in the way of judgment, but that they might practise that which is lovely,—though, by their repentance and reformation, he should seem *without proof* of his apostleship,

as having no occasion to display his miraculous powers in the punishment of offenders. 7. "Now, I pray to God, that ye do nothing evil (*οὐτις μὴδὲν*); not that we may appear approved (or having proof, *δοκιμασί*), but that ye may do that which is beautiful or good (*τὸ καλόν*), though we should be as disapproved (*ὡς ἀδοκιμοί*, without proof.)" This is a further evidence that the word *ἀδοκιμος* has no reference to any decree of reprobation; for we can hardly suppose that the Apostle would have been willing to abandon the hope of salvation, for the sake of promoting the spiritual welfare of others. In the event of their returning at once to their duty, some might be disposed to censure him for his uncharitableness, in forming a rash judgment respecting the disorderly members: they might even persist in their doubts respecting his apostolic authority, but that would give him comparatively little uneasiness; for in the exercise of miraculous gifts, he aimed at the advancement of the Gospel, and the good of the church, not at weakening the christian cause by discouraging the penitent through undue severity: 8. "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." Instead, therefore, of courting opportunities for the infliction of punishment, he *rejoiced* when the disciples, by their holy and consistent conduct, evinced their spiritual strength, and laid him under no necessity of denouncing the judgments of heaven; and he prayed (*ἐυχόμεθα*) also for their *restoration* to a sound and healthy state, by the removal of all disorders, and by the readmission of the penitent members to their communion: 9. "For we are glad (*χαίρομεν*) when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, (even) your restoration, (*καταρτισίς*, *consummationem—Vulg.*)" This last clause is rendered, by Dr Doddridge, "even your being set in perfect order." No doubt, the Apostle prayed also for their entire deliverance from sin, and perfect conformity to the will of God; but he here refers to their *disjointed* state as a church, in consequence of the prevailing dissensions and disorders among them, and his desire was, that these hindrances to mutual edification being removed, they might be restored, each to his proper place, to the edifying of the body in love. A humane judge, who is entrusted with the power of life and death, will *rejoice* when, by the orderly behaviour of the citizens, there is no occasion for the exercise of his judicial authority, though he should thus appear *weak* as other men.

This desire for their mutual improvement had induced him, while at a distance, to give these directions and admonitions *by letter*, to prevent all necessity of his *acting severely* towards offenders, according to the extraordinary power with which he had been entrusted by the Great Head of the church, for the *establishment* of His people in faith and holiness, and not for the *destruction* of men's lives, far less for shutting them out of the kingdom of heaven, by driving them to despair: 10. "On this account, (*ἵνα τοῦτο*) I write these things, being absent, lest being present, I should use sharpness, (*σφοδρῶς ἡρπεύσαι*, *durius agam—Vulg.*) according to the power which the Lord hath given me, for (*ὑπὲρ*) edification, and not for destruction." The whole of this passage shews how far the Apostle was from indulging a vindictive or overbearing spirit. He did not convert the discipline of the church into an engine of oppression or cruelty; nor did he exercise his miraculous powers, agreeably to his own humour, or for the gratification of private animosity or personal pique: his great aim was to bring the offender to repentance, by salutary admonition; so as to render all supernatural judgments *unnecessary*; and, in this respect, he forms a striking contrast to those churchmen, who, in after ages, seemed to exercise their arbitrary and unscriptural authority, only for the *destruction* of the servants of God, while they hindered the *edification* of the church, by their erroneous doctrines and vicious lives; so that, had the providence of God not interposed, all knowledge of true religion would long since have been banished from the world. Mr Scott, indeed, observes, on the 8th verse, that had the apostles attempted to work a miracle in their own spirit, and contrary to the interests of true religion, God would not have co-operated with them, and the attempt would have been vain; but though this is readily admitted, it seems unnecessary even to *suppose* they would have been inclined to make such an attempt: their regard for the divine glory, and their love to the souls of men, would not *allow* them to throw any obstacle in the way of the conversion of sinners to God.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We are often most forward to find fault with others, when we have most need to examine ourselves. This is the more ne-

cessary, as the judgment of man is formed from outward appearances, and the safety of our *souls* must be judged by the state of our *hearts*. Is the power of Christ displayed in us? are we living in obedience to his authority, and proving ourselves to be his faithful followers, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Let us be thankful for every admonition, and every afflictive dispensation, which, by trying our faith, purges away our dross, and prepares us for that solemn scrutiny, when the Son of God shall sit in judgment upon us, as a refiner and purifier of silver. May the Lord grant that we may not be disapproved and rejected!

2. It is necessary to guard against the abuse of christian discipline. By neglecting to execute the laws of Christ against offenders, a deceitful peace may be preserved in the church, but its purity and glory are sacrificed. It is no doubt a painful duty to exclude any one from the ordinances of Christ. Every lenient method should first be used to bring them to repentance; but if they continue hardened and impenitent, we must not spare. Still, we must seek the spiritual good of the offenders; we should earnestly pray for their restoration. It should be our aim, as followers of Christ, to abstain from all appearance of evil, and to cleave to that which is good. Then every faithful pastor will rejoice that he has no call to use *sharpness*, and we shall not be driven by the terror of punishment, but drawn by the cords of love.

SECTION SECOND.—VERSES 11—14.

CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE.

THE Apostle having finished his exhortations to the Corinthian church, and having fully vindicated his character from the aspersions thrown on it, concludes this interesting epistle in a very affectionate manner: 11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." He expresses his

sincere wishes for their temporal and spiritual *welfare*; both as individuals and as a church. It was their duty and their privilege to *rejoice* (*χαίρει*) in the Lord always, as their all-sufficient portion and unchangeable friend. He exhorts them to be again *knit together* in sentiment and in heart. So the word *καταρτίζομαι* properly signifies: it is used to express the restoration of a disjointed limb; and it may here intimate the propriety of giving up their party distinctions, and of restoring the penitent offenders to their former place in the church, that there might be no *schism* in the body. It was also proper that they should be sincere and *upright* in their profession, aiming at higher degrees of knowledge and holiness till they should attain the full stature of *perfect men* in Christ Jesus, (Ephes. iv. 13. Heb. vi. 1.) He further exhorts them to be resigned and cheerful amidst all their trials and temptations—to *comfort themselves* (*παρκαλῦσθαι*) in the Lord their God—to anticipate, with holy joy, the glorious prize set before them, and to animate and encourage one another, by mutual *exhortations*, to run the christian race, that they might lay hold on eternal life. He entreats them to *mind the same thing*, (*το αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*), as this phrase is rendered in other parts of Scripture, (Phil. iii. 16.) It could hardly be expected, that, in such a numerous body, no *difference of opinion* should exist; but it was their duty to lay aside all unprofitable disputes, and to unite together, as with one heart, in striving to promote the glory of God—the honour of the Gospel—their mutual edification, and the salvation of their fellow men. Thus, though in some respects their judgments might be *various*, their spirit, their *taste*, and their aims, would be *the same*. Above all, he recommends them to cultivate a spirit of *peace* (*εἰρηνικῆς*), leaving off their indecent contentions, submitting themselves one to another in the fear of God; dwelling together in unity as brethren, and studying to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And for their encouragement, he assures them that, in this way, they would secure the divine *presence* and approbation. He exhibits the common Father of christians under the delightful and endearing character of the *God of peace and love*. As such, he is the source and pattern of all true virtue and happiness; he has revealed himself as in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and opening up a way for the honourable exercise of mercy. Instead of alarming us, by the terrors of his justice, and his

power, he commends his *love* to our regard, and speaks to us in the soft accents of *peace*.

How much is comprehended in this single verse! Happy would it be for christian churches, were they always to act on these principles. Instead of tolerating *abuses*—of giving way to unreasonable *complaints*, respecting the dispensations of Providence—of being *divided* in their sentiments and affections, and indulging in mutual *resentments* and recriminations,—were they to aim at the removal of every cause of *offence*; to *rejoice* in the privileges and prospects of the children of God; to be *united* in their endeavours to promote the divine glory, and to study the things that make for *peace*, they would each resemble an affectionate and happy family, and would exhibit a lively image of the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven: the enemies of the Gospel would be put to silence—iniquity, as ashamed, would hide her head—and the word of the Lord would have free course and be glorified. Though absolute *perfection* be unattainable in the present state, we ought to strive to come as near to it as possible, by the cultivation of every holy principle and gracious affection. We have *every* ground of *comfort* in the faithfulness, love, and power of God; and it is *our* duty to exhort one another daily to the practice of love and good works. Nothing is so injurious to a church, as when *different sides* are taken by its members, and opposite views tenaciously maintained. On the other hand, though entire *unanimity* is not to be expected regard to every branch of duty, and different views may be conscientiously held on some doubtful points of doctrine, it is quite possible for the members of churches to lay these aside for the present, and to direct their chief attention to those subjects on which they are agreed: And in all cases of discipline—in the choice of office-bearers, and in the admission or exclusion of members, no occasion should be given of grieving or injuring a brother, but every means should be used to satisfy his judgment, and to remove his conscientious scruples. A house divided against itself cannot stand; and a society of professing christians will soon be dissolved, if a contentious and disputatious spirit be allowed to prevail. Instances of this kind daily occur. Every conscientious christian will be disposed rather to sacrifice his own interest and inclination, than obstruct the general good; and will consider the preservation of *peace*, of far more import-

ance, than the settlement of any doubtful question, or the vanity of triumphing over a weak opponent. The design of the Gospel is to restore us to the friendship of God, and to unite us together in peace and love: the Holy Spirit, like the peaceful dove, flies from the abodes of strife, and dwells with the humble and contrite in heart. And it is possible for a church to be glorying in its purity of doctrine and apostolic order, while it has deprived itself, by its captious and overbearing spirit, of the presence and approbation of the God of peace and love.

In the following verse, the Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to testify their mutual love, by the token of affectionate respect common in that age and country: 12. "Salute (*anastrophe*) one another with an holy kiss." I have already mentioned (on 1 Epis. xvi. 20.) that the primitive christians thus embraced each other at meeting or parting, but no particular directions are given whether this should be observed in their public assemblies, or in their private intercourse: and it could not be meant, that, where this mode of salutation is *unusual*, the feelings of decency and propriety should be sacrificed, or the solemnity of public worship interrupted, for the sake of maintaining a rigid uniformity in things indifferent. It is a poor exchange, when external forms are substituted for the spontaneous movements of genuine esteem; and this has often been the effect of indiscriminate zeal for primitive order.

Conformably to the amiable practice of the time, he sends the affectionate good wishes of the christians in Macedonia, whence this epistle was transmitted, to their brethren in Corinth, for whom they doubtless cherished a warm regard: 13. "All the saints salute you."

He concludes, with giving them his apostolic benediction, which has since been generally used by christian assemblies at the close of public worship. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, (be) with you all. Amen." The priests under the law were commanded to bless the people in the name of the Lord, using the following beautiful and comprehensive form of words: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," (Numb. vi. 24—26.). It is remarkable, that the sacred name Jehovah, is there thrice repeated, as if in-

tended to convey an intimation of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. It is also pointed in three different ways in the Hebrew Bible. But *here*, agreeably to the superior light of the new dispensation, this distinction is very plainly taught. The same truth is conveyed in the form of baptism prescribed by our Saviour, with which the Corinthians were doubtless well acquainted: "Go ye therefore and preach (or disciple) all nations, baptizing them in (or into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xxviii. 19.) The words must be viewed as a prayer addressed to the Holy Trinity, and imply the essential deity of each person. It is observable, that the article is applied to each name, *τῷ Πατρὶ—τῷ Υἱῷ—τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι*, which affords a strong proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit. It has been objected by the Unitarians, that the word *κοινωνία*, communion or fellowship, cannot be applicable to a person, yet the same word is applied both to the Father and to the Son. "Our fellowship (*κοινωνία*) is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," (1 John i. 3.); a word of the same import is used, Heb. iii. 14. "For we are made partakers (*μετέχοντες*) of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." The expression does not imply that the Spirit itself is personally divided, but he distributes his divine gifts, "to every man severally as he pleases."

The benediction of the Apostle is very comprehensive: He prays that they might enjoy the peculiar *favour* and *grace* (*χάρις*) of the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer and Husband of the church, through whom every spiritual blessing is communicated, and out of whose fulness all his people receive abundance of grace; in other words, that all the blessed fruits of his atonement and intercession might be imparted to their souls. He further prays, that they might possess the full, free, and unchangeable *love of God*, in whose sovereign mercy and rich grace the whole scheme of redemption originated—whose favour is life, and whose loving kindness is better than life—and who has secured, by promise and by oath, the everlasting salvation of his people. In addition to this, he prays that they might *jointly participate* in the rich and salutary influences of the *Holy Spirit*, as the guide, teacher, and comforter of the church; the author of hope, and love, and joy; and the earnest of the heavenly inheritance. In a word, the divine persons in

the Godhead are here recognized as sustaining different offices in the economy of redemption, and as uniting in devising, executing, and applying the dispensation of mercy towards a guilty world. Every thing necessary to our real welfare is summed up in these words; and the liberal and benevolent mind of the Apostle, here finds ample room for the full expression of his christian love.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How often is this beautiful and emphatic benediction repeated in a cold and formal manner! How indecent the practice of many in our worshipping assemblies, who busy themselves in preparing to *withdraw* while these solemn words are pronounced! Let us often endeavour to realize the full meaning of the expressions. If we enjoy the favour of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit, what is there left to value or desire! The favour of man is deceitful—the love of the creature is inconstant—and we cannot always enjoy the communion of our earthly friends. But the grace of the Saviour, like himself, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the love of the Father is constant and unbounded, and the presence of the Spirit is promised to the church, even to the end of the world.

“ His love no end or measure knows,
No change can turn its course;
Immutably the same it flows,
From one eternal source.”

2. How short-lived are the enjoyments and friendships of the present state! The nearest and most affectionate friends must separate, and pronounce the painful word “Farewell!” How careful should they be to improve opportunities of intercourse, by exciting each other to the practice of every christian virtue! They may soon be called to remove to a distance in the course of Providence, or the stroke of death may put a period to their union, and they may then reflect with sorrow on the misimprovement of their privileges. Let it be our constant aim so to walk that the separation may be but temporary, and that we may meet in that happy world, where parting will be unknown—

where the soul shall rejoice for ever in the favour of the Lord Jesus, in the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Gracious and ever blessed God ! grant that both the Writer and the Reader of these pages, may experience thy rich mercy, may walk in the light of thy countenance, and may be guided and strengthened by thy Holy Spirit ; till they have escaped all the perils of this wilderness, and are admitted into thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord ; to whom, with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page 7 line 4 for *inscription*, read *postscript*.
 — 10 — 8, for κτρ, read κτρ.
 — 33 foot note, for *vestrem* read *vestram*.
 — 125 line 19, for εξουθεναιου read εξουθεναιους.
 — 144 — 4, for *ligitimate* read *legitimate*.
 — 175 — 28, for *us* read *as*.
 — 239 — 17, for διακρινωμ read διακρινωμ
 — 245 — 1, for *fea sof* read *feast of*.
 — 256 — 31, for *the appointment of a dictator* read *their disputes with the patricians*.
 — 285 — 39, for *tammering* read *stammering*.
 — 315 — 20, for 'υπταξιν read 'υπταξιν
 — 321 — 27, for *of you* read *to you*.
 — 324 — 20, supply *of* after *face*.
 — 329 — 6, for *aken* read *taken*.
 — 341 — 6, for *are commendation* read *a recommendation*.
 — 369 — 22, for προπιμφθιναι read προπιμφθιναι.
 — 396 — 28, for *as one word* read *as a conjunction*.
 — 409 — 14, for θλιβαινα read θλιβαιναι.
 — 413 — 20, for διαφθαγιται read διαφθεγιται.



